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DIPLOMATIC controversy between Germany and the United States over the legal status of defensively armed merchant vessels has one most unfortunate characteristic. It turns on questions of law which conceal rather than express the real objects of the two governments and the real controversy between them. Germany's real object both for the present and the future is to destroy the whole fabric of marine law, which enables Great Britain to use the control of the seas during war to destroy the commerce of her enemies. The Germans have been agitating and contriving either to secure the assistance of the United States in their attempt to "free the seas," or, failing to secure American assistance, they have tried to involve the American government, as a consequence of rigid obedience to existing law, in situations from which American public opinion would revolt. Such has been the only adequate explanation of the submarine campaign against commerce, of the attitude assumed by Germany in the subsequent negotiations, and of the agitation against the export of munitions. The American government has been ostensibly engaged in preserving and defending a technical neutral status under a system of law which, as its officials well know, ought to be modified, but which the government has neither the power nor the desire to change. It is really engaged in defending something entirely different. The German design of breaking down a system of law which is the most potent existing obstacle to aggressive militarism and which is entitled to development rather than destruction, has in truth been seeking American assistance in a conspiracy to injure an essential condition of American national independence and integrity.

GERMANY'S share in the controversy has been most adroitly handled. In spite of the fact that the actions of its representatives violated American laws and were offensive to American officials, in spite of the fact that the German government deliberately planned an act which resulted in the killing of over one hundred inoffensive American citizens, its diplomacy has constantly presented an appearance of reluctantly admitting under pressure unfair American contentions. It finally succeeded in manoeuvering the American government into assuming a position from which the American case looked exceptionally weak and the German case exceptionally strong. After securing an admission from the State Department that a defensive armament against cruisers would constitute a dangerously offensive armament against submarines, the German government announced its intention of sinking armed merchantmen without warning, and asked the American government to refuse protection to Americans foolhardy enough to take passage on such vessels. For a moment it looked as if the administration would yield. If it did not yield it had increased unnecessarily the difficulties of a flat refusal, because it had admitted some justice in the German contention, and because American popular opinion had never been very warmly interested in preserving the right of Americans to travel safely even on wholly unarmed belligerent

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merchantmen. At the last moment the President stiffened up, decided to hold his position, weak as it was, with all his available force, and to defy his foreign and domestic enemies to rout him out. When he did so it looked as if German diplomacy had finally succeeded in finding a flaw in the system of marine law which the American government could not defend, and which if allowed to spread might enfeeble the whole structure.

AMERICANS should be thankful that weak as is in certain respects the position into which the President has allowed himself to be crowded, he has decided to hold tight. There are the gravest possible issues at stake. The letter to Senator Stone contained these words: "What we are contending for in this matter is of the very essence of the things that have made America a sovereign nation. She cannot yield them without conceding her own impotency as a nation and making virtual surrender of her independent position among the nations of the world." The average American may well have found these fine phrases strained and unreal. Why should the United States virtually surrender its independent position among the nations, because American citizens are warned not to travel on merchant vessels whose "defensive" armament makes their supposed unoffensiveness look dubious? Yet the President is justified, not because the point in controversy is of decisive importance, but because a belligerent cannot force a neutral nation to surrender acknowledged rights without threatening the neutral's independence. That is what Germany is doing. She is trying to force this country into a position which Great Britain could only regard as unfriendly and unneutral; and her object in so doing is to subvert a whole system of marine law the perpetuity of which, or of something corresponding thereto, is as essential to American as it is British independence. It is difficult to make Americans understand the gravity of the issue, because it does not appear on the surface and because they have always confused neutrality with irresponsibility. They were willing to enjoy rights under international law without being prepared to fight for those rights if challenged or imperiled. If the people should not sustain the President in his present attitude, the cup of national humiliation would be deep and bitter.

AMERICANS should also be thankful that the President has challenged Congress as well as Germany. Whatever may be thought about his handling of diplomatic negotiations with foreign countries, the courage and the skill of domestic diplomacy in this particular crisis is beyond question. He knew that a Congressmen can not afford to be anything but patriotic, and as he was in a position to establish and advertise the obligations of patriotism, he seized the opportunity to convert his opponents into the enemies of the country. How many Congressmen can act on his errant individual convictions after reading: "The report that there are divided councils in Congress in regard to the foreign policy of the government is being made industrious use of in foreign capitals. I believe that report to be false; but so long as it is anywhere credited, it cannot fail to do the greatest harm and expose the country to the most serious risks." After that, the Congressman who opposed the President became a man who deliberately plunged his country into peril. The incident is disquieting because it proves what an enormous power a crisis in foreign affairs places in the hands of a President and how that power might be abused. It proves also that whatever else may happen to foreign policy it cannot be subjected to Democratic control. President Wilson is brushing aside Congress just as the German government brushed aside the Socialists. But he is doing it in a good cause, and the fact that, whatever its effect on his own fortunes, he has been forced to do it, will arouse the country to the seriousness of the crisis and the reality of the controversy. The doubting American may rest assured that in this instance, at all events, his patriotism has not been invoked on behalf of an unnecessary or unworthy national policy.

THE military object of the Germans in their present operations is evidently no less than the encircling of the whole Verdun salient. Plain indeed is the value now of the St. Mihiel wedge, for German attacks on Fresnes-en-Woevre from the southeast would not otherwise have been possible, and these attacks, to-day the fiercest on the whole front, are winning slowly ahead. Fresnes and Eix are threatened, Manheulles and Champlon have fallen. The object of the French must be of course to hold Verdun if possible; failing that to retreat southwestward, without loss of prisoners, to a new line. Local counter attacks have so far been fruitless; the French infantry has shown no superiority in morale over their adversaries. Two courses are now open to them if they cannot longer maintain their local positions—either to retreat and to occupy a straightened line southwest of Verdun, or to launch a general counter attack east of the St. Mihiel salient between Pont-à-Mousson and St. Mihiel. Such a counter attack, if successful, would take in the rear the Germans attacking east and southeast of Verdun and throw them back in complete disorder. Unfortunately it is not likely that there will be time for artillery preparation for such a

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general counter attack, and without proper artillery preparation success cannot be hoped for against the organized field works of the Western front.

ON Monday the Senate ratified the Haitian treaty by which the United States establishes a financial and police protectorate. An American general-receiver of export and import duties, an American financial adviser, and a Haitian constabulary officered by Americans represent the chief agents of American control. Examinations are to be held from time to time to see whether native officers can be found to replace the Americans on the constabulary. It is the radical and wise solution for weak and distracted Haiti. It will assure order, it will eliminate the possibility of European intervention, and it will stamp out the corruption which has destroyed Haitian administration, prevented educational and commercial progress, and made the government the prize of intrigue and faction. The only people who have lost any substantial "independence" are the corrupt politicians. The natives of Haiti will secure more actual independence than they have ever known before, now that they will no longer be the victims of chronic revolution and an almost incredible regime of graft and incompetence. Our government has assumed a splendid obligation, for it is now in a position to insure to the island the first essentials of civilized life. Provided that the Americans appointed to Haiti are men of ability and vision, they can create that order and efficiency necessary for a people in order to develop itself. Haiti is not going to be Americanized. It is going to be protected from conquest, disintegration, and the corruption of political cliques.

THE mystery of racial traits is emphasized at the death of Dr. Henry Baird Favill of Chicago. Mainly of white stock, there was Indian blood in Dr. Favill, and it is for his semblance to a group leader and chief that he will long be remembered. He was active and eminent as a medical man not only in a wide private practice but as a lecturer, a consultant and a leading spirit in local and national medical organizations. But it was in his personal and communal relations that he was most felt. His magnificent rugged physique suggested the group chieftain. This was fully borne out by his superb vitality, his accessibility, his wisdom of the heart. He had that character common to all big personalities, the inspiring suggestion of a free and unqualified natural force. He kept in Chicago the personal touch with his patients that was natural to his practice in Wisconsin, but he established a similar valuable relation to Chicago in politics, civics, education and humane organization. Publicity has much to do with popularity. Some popularity is nine-tenths publicity. But Dr. Favill's was a popularity founded on realities. For all the complex and anonymous character of the modern city, his spirit will march on in the places that knew him, very much as the memory of a tribal chief.

A FEW months before Henry James's death he became a British subject, and everybody who cares for his talent will be glad that he found reasons which amply satisfied him for expressing his love of England in a formal and public way. It was a little as if one who had long been a believer had at last been received into his natural church. For years he had lived in England. In England his talent flourished and flowered, and grew more nearly like the thing he willed it to be. His perception refined and refined itself, he was able to trace feelings further and further back toward the moment of his birth in conscienceness, he achieved preferences and discriminations that were out of his reach so long as he wrote his older and simpler prose. It was chiefly in England that nature gave him suggestions for the high manner of the men and women he has painted in his later novels. Death has come to him when his greatest novels had all been written, when his critical insight was at its deepest and finest, and when he would have chosen, so dauntless were his hopes of victory for England and her allies, to go on living until the end of the war.

EVIDENCE is accumulating that the close of the war will be marked by a thoroughgoing reorganization of the commercial policy of the chief European countries. British free trade will hardly survive the war. Indicative of present British public opinion are the resolutions recently adopted by the British Association of Chambers of Commerce. One resolution, unanimously adopted by this representative body, adheres to the ideal of national self-sufficiency. "The strength and safety of the British nation in time of national peril lie in the possession of power to produce its requirements from its own soil and its own factories." Resolutions favoring colonial preference and reciprocal trading relations with allies and finally with neutrals, were also carried almost unanimously. For tactical reasons the word "protection" was avoided, but the protectionistic implications of these resolutions are obvious. British agriculture and British industry are now in a position to demand more sympathetic attention from the government than at any time since Cobden. American export industries will find it worth while to take into account this nationalistic trend in commercial policy and adjust their calculations accordingly.

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Submarines as Commerce Destroyers

CONTROVERSY over the use of submarines as commerce destroyers has been carried far enough to justify one radical conclusion. The attempt of the American government to regularize the practice of commerce-destroying by vessels possessing the peculiar strength and the peculiar weakness of the submarine must in the long run fail. If the submarine survives as a commerce destroyer it will do so at the expense of the existing structure of marine law. If, on the contrary, the existing structure of marine law is to survive and to be enlarged, the practice of commerce-destroying by submarines will have to be ruled out. When the question of submarine warfare against commerce was first raised, the American government could scarcely avoid the attempt to assimilate the intruder into the body of customary law. It has been rewarded with an appearance of success, in that the German government has in part consented to operate the submarines subject to existing rules. But the success proved to be superficial and temporary. In so far as submarines are operated according to law, they practically cease to destroy any commerce. Yet if they are not so operated their unscrupulous activity will produce a reign of terror on the high seas.

Careful compliance with the law of visit and search demands the existence of certain favorable conditions which are necessarily absent in the case of the submarine. The skipper of a merchant vessel is under no necessary obligation to submit to capture. He can attempt to escape; he can even resist, provided he is willing to expose his crew and his vessels to destruction in case of failure. Whether he does or does not resist or attempt to escape will depend upon a calculation of chances. Usually he cannot even contemplate resistance because the chances of success would be negligible, and because the consequences of failure might be too terrible. But with any kind of opportunity he will frequently and justifiably seek to escape. The commerce destroyer consequently should be powerful enough to put resistance out of the question and swift enough to make escape almost impossible. It should be able to exert overwhelming power on the spot, and its immediate superiority should be sustained by a similarly incontestable general superiority. All the chances should run against the resistance or the final escape of the merchant vessel. There should exist a disparity of force between the captor and the captive similar to that between the policeman and the lawbreaker. If such were not the case the merchant vessels would often take the chance of getting away or even fighting, just as they formerly did against privateers.

The analogy between submarines and privateers is significantly close. The former will be used as commerce destroyers only by nations whose regular cruisers cannot keep the seas. They operate under practical conditions which provoke apprehension and panic in the crews both of the commerce destroyer and its possible victims. They are vessels powerful enough on the offensive to constitute a dangerous enemy to a superdreadnought, while practically their only defence against attack consists in their ability to submerge. Their terrific offensive power makes them feared and hated by their possible victims, and their vulnerability prevents the fear and hatred from necessarily being impotent. Promises made by governments to observe the old rules in submarine warfare on commerce will not prevent the fear and hatred from existing, from getting expressed, and from being sufficiently justified. A vessel with a small crew designed particularly for concealment and for the extermination of its enemies, which is subject to dire peril as long as it swims on the surface, cannot be operated so as to avoid costly mistakes. Its commanders will be forced to make decisions carelessly and hurriedly; it will capture only to destroy; and in accomplishing its work of destruction it rarely can safeguard the lives of passengers and crew. The mistakes made by the kind of submarine commander who assaulted the Gulflight and the Petrolite, who sank the Ancona with hundreds of passengers still on board, who thought or pretended to think that the Arabic was ramming his boat, who believed or pretended to believe that the Lusitania was a part of the British navy—such mistakes would become the ordinary incidents of a submarine warfare against commerce. Their frequency would no less certainly provoke the captains of merchant vessels to take dangerous chances of escape and even resistance. A skilful skipper in command of a fast boat with one good gun on board might be able to " get " the submarine at least as often as the submarine would " get " him.

Thus the effect of submarine attacks on commerce would be deplorable. The furtive lawlessness would breed similar lawlessness on the part of the merchant mariners. The seas would be violated by a barbarous guerilla warfare, which would break down the distinction between trading and war vessels, which would endanger the lives and boats of neutrals on the high seas, and which would make it almost impossible for neutrals not to become involved in the quarrel. The existing marine law, which until recently has made travel on the ocean comparatively safe for non-combatants of all nations, would be superseded by a kind of anarchy that, in case many submarines could be kept actively afloat, would become intolerable.

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Such, it must be remembered, is precisely the result which the Germans wish to bring about. They do not at present expect by means of submarine attacks on commerce seriously to injure Great Britain's carrying trade. What they are hoping to damage is the fabric of law which has furnished the basis of marine order during war. That law has been written by sea power for the purpose of totally preventing any commerce during war advantageous to its enemies. Its existence is the great obstacle to the freedom of the seas in the German meaning of the phrase, a meaning that carries with it the right of all nations to trade during war almost to the same extent that they do during peace. The law enables the Allies to import rifles and ammunition, and prevents the Germans from importing the necessaries of life for her civil population. The Germans want to discredit all interference with commerce during war by bringing home to Americans and other neutrals the results of such interference. They want to obtain American assistance either in breaking the blockade or in damaging British and French commerce. If not they hope at least to arouse opposition to future blockades. The submarine at present is less a military weapon than an instrument of international agitation. By means of its activity Germans seek to persuade neutral traders that neutral interest lies not in commerce with one belligerent, as the law practically allows, but in commerce with all belligerents. Thus they propose to dispose of the whole traditional system of marine law.

By clever management they have, as we point out elsewhere, forced the American government into a disadvantageous place from which extrication without loss of some kind will be difficult. Yet the difficulty of the situation should help make Americans understand on which side of this controversy their own national interest lies, as well as the genuinely international interest. They have in the past flirted with the German conception of marine freedom, but the present war and its controversies should convince them that a system of law which secures almost complete freedom of trade during war would be injurious to the interests of genuinely pacific nations. Freedom of the seas, like civil freedom on land, must eventually rest upon the orderly exercise and authoritative power and control. The Germans are seeking to destroy the British empire of the seas and its associated legal system, because the empire of the seas always did and always will constitute the insurmountable obstacle to indefinite extension of military empire of the land. The United States should not only refuse to furnish them with aid and encouragement, but it must in the end line up on the side of British sea power. The security of the American nation, no less than the realization of those ideals of international organization so indispensable to the future of democracy, depends upon the extension and perpetuation of an authoritative empire of the seas.

Hence it is that organized sea power will be obliged to outlaw submarines as commerce destroyers. Their continued use in such capacity would produce a condition of terrorism on the seas during war not dissimilar to that which prevailed in the seventeenth century. The Germans would be willing to give up the submarine attacks on commerce and restore order on the seas, but only on condition of getting rid by these means of any organized system of marine control. They are offering to neutrals the choice between anarchy on the ocean during war, and a legal system that would make the peaceful trading nations the accomplices of a land empire, no matter what the cause for which it was fighting. Neutrals should reject both alternatives, and look for a way out in a different direction. Organized sea power will be obliged eventually to propose the outlawing of submarines as commerce destroyers. The proposal cannot be adopted without neutral assistance, and the necessary assistance should be furnished by the United States. Organized sea power possessing an effective control of the seas constitutes an indispensable agency of an ultimate international settlement. The American people could not help to break it up without betraying their own most precious national interests and ideals. They should be willing even to increase its authority and permit their own fleet to coöperate in consolidating the control, provided their government can reach some understanding with Great Britain as to the system of law for the benefit of which the control should be exercised.

Brandeis and the Shoe Machinery Company

THE scope of the Brandeis investigation involves so many intricate legal controversies, and the proceedings are so fragmentarily reported, that the most conscientious reader must be left with a sense of bewilderment. Distorting headlines help to suppress an understanding of the facts, and from it all emanates with subtle cruelty a feeling that there must be something wrong somewhere. Much as we should like to do so, it is of course impossible to give space to each of the so-called "charges" before the committee. One and all they are baseless as accusations of misconduct or impropriety or indications of unworthiness for the Bench. They are charges such as those in the Warren case, which counsel not involved in that

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particular controversy like Mr. Storey, but claiming another personal grievance, have declared wholly without foundation. A very active career of thirty-five years at the Bar has been searched with a fine and venomous-toothed comb, and the so-called facts have trickled thinner and thinner as the investigation has progressed.

One naturally seeks for the motive to misconduct, particularly in the case of so extraordinarily able a lawyer, a lawyer so fated to success at the Bar as Mr. Brandeis. There has been no breath of mercenary suggestion, no intimation of the ordinary motives of self-interest; the various charges have been grouped round a central theory of " disloyalty " to clients, as apparently a whimsical end in itself. The instance most insistently cited, the one that has been elaborately spread broadcast for years and has probably found most lodgement in honest minds, is Mr. Brandeis's relation with the United Shoe Machinery Company. To this case we invite detailed attention.

For many years prior to 1899 Mr. Brandeis was counsel and director for three shoe machinery companies. In 1899 these companies with others became part of the United Shoe Machinery Company. Mr. Brandeis became one of the nineteen directors of this company and one of its counsel. The company was an unusually efficient example of business organization whose policy contained many features of a so-called good trust. Up to April, 1906, Mr. Brandeis thoroughly believed in its policies and its methods, for monopolistic as the corporation was, he believed it operated beneficially to the shoe manufacturing industry. With this belief he opposed an attack carried on in the legislature of Massachusetts by certain shoe machine manufacturers for their own interest. In this he was sustained by the ablest and most public-spirited shoe manufacturers in the state.

About this time his attention was called by such manufacturers to certain features in the Shoe Machinery Company's leases, particularly to the so-called tying clause which seemed objectionable to them and inimical to the public interest. By this clause a shoe manufacturer taking one class of machines from the United bound himself to take all other machines that the company put out. Mr. Brandeis did not draw this tying clause. He found it when he joined the United. He had thought that this lease operated beneficially; but when Messrs. McElwain and Jones directed his attention to a claim of abuse he took the question up with President Winslow of the Shoe Machinery Company. Mr. Winslow promised to consider the complaint of these shoe manufacturers, but the promise had no results. Mr. Brandeis after further study became more and more dubious of the soundness of the company's policy, and more and more convinced that the policy persisted in must prove injurious to the public. Unable to convince President Winslow and his associates of his views, in December, 1906, he retired as director and early in 1907 he withdrew as counsel.

From 1907 on the company made no attempt to ameliorate its monopolistic grip. On the contrary it aggressively sought to check and succeeded in checking every attempt to deal with it. Then begins a train of events involving the legal position of the United Company which it is vital to bear in mind. To relieve the known abuses the Massachusetts legislature in 1907 passed an act prohibiting the tying-clause lease. The Shoe Machinery Company flaunted evasion of the statute and put the four hundred and fifty shoe manufacturers of Massachusetts at its mercy by reserving the right to terminate the lease of all its machines on thirty days' notice. The offensive lease also fell afoul the federal law. Under the more vigorous enforcement and better judicial interpretation of the Sherman law the danger of federal prosecution became imminent. Apart from legal attempts to curb the Shoe Machinery Company, effective opposition could come only from a shoe machine business equipped to contest its field.

In 1910 Thomas G. Plant had developed such a system. The monopoly of the Shoe Machinery was at last seriously threatened; the shoe manufacturing industry hopefully expected that the Plant system would give it and the community that freedom which the law was unable to secure. One hope proved abortive, for in September, 1910, the Shoe Machinery bought out the Plant system before it commenced operation. This transaction forms part of the complaint of the government in the Shoe Machinery suit now awaiting appeal. Therefore at the end of 1910 we find futile attempts at legal regulation, open violation of law by the Shoe Machinery, the suppression of incipient competition, and strangling control of the entire industry.

We have said nothing of Mr. Brandeis's activities since his retirement in 1907 from the Shoe Machinery Company, because there was no activity. During all the controversy he had remained silent and inactive except that he had refused retainers from competitors of the Shoe Machinery. But in 1910, the controversy having become one of the dominant public questions of New England, Mr. Brandeis rightly felt that he could no longer remain passive. With his ability, with his interest in public affairs, he was the one man to lend aid in any disinterested effort to restore freedom of enterprise in one of the vital industries of Massachusetts.

In May, 1911, the Shoe Manufacturers Alliance,

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an organization formed not for the purpose of securing a lower price for shoe machinery but to free the industry of a pernicious monopoly, asked his advice. This work Mr. Brandeis undertook, advising the Alliance in establishing a shoe machinery business, and helping draft legislation to meet the abuses which the recent years had revealed. He undertook it not as a lawyer but as a citizen. He paid out of his own pocket $2,500 towards carrying on the public campaign. The action is at once significant and characteristic, for it is precisely the motive that operated in his campaign against the New Haven. No one dares attack him for that fight now, for the event proved that he had the prophecy of expert knowledge enlisted in the public interest, yet hardly a person knows how disinterested these enterprises were. In the New Haven as in the Shoe Machinery, Mr. Brandeis refused a retainer, and actually paid to his own firm $25,000 for the use of his time and expenses in carrying on the fight.

President Winslow knew all these steps in Mr. Brandeis's relation to the Shoe Machinery controversy. He knew that Mr. Brandeis in May, 1911, advised the Shoe Manufacturers Alliance. There was at the time never a peep of injured innocence, never a suggestion of "disloyalty." On the contrary, on July 12, 1911, Mr. Brandeis conferred with President Winslow and his directors and frankly canvassed the whole situation.

It was not until the government moved against the Shoe Manufacturers under the Sherman law, not until Governor Foss in Massachusetts threatened proceedings (for neither of which actions Mr. Brandeis was responsible), not until after Mr. Brandeis's testimony before the Clapp committee in 1911 urging further legislation, that systematic attacks of misrepresentation to discredit him were begun. It is Mr. Brandeis's extraordinary ability in analyzing the Shoe Machinery Company's ruthless methods—methods at the inception of which he protested, which assumed an aspect in 1910 they could not have had in 1906—that has aroused the resentment of its friends, and it is their inability to understand any motive other than selfishness that invented the slanderous charges. President Winslow on the witness stand the other day was compelled to admit that Mr. Brandeis's public activities against the Shoe Machinery Company did not involve any use of knowledge or experience he had gained as counsel for the Shoe Machinery Company.

In good truth the Shoe Machinery case is proof, perhaps more than any other event in his life, that Louis D. Brandeis is at once judicial, rarely courageous, possessed of an ardent and calm sense of justice which to him is truth in action; judicial because of the thoroughness with which he studies facts, his constant openness to new facts, his readiness to reverse himself, his patient endeavor to convince others. The case illustrates strikingly his unprejudiced love of truth, and his courage to pursue it. His "change of opinion" was unmotived by money; it meant loss of money. The objection to his conduct simmers down to an idea of "disloyalty" to an old client—a charge which means nothing less than that the employment of a lawyer involves perpetual subsequent bondage—that his duties of citizenship are forever forfeited against any misconduct of any former client. Lawyers may shrink, almost every lawyer would shrink, from the costs entailed in such a fight as Mr. Brandeis waged against the Shoe Machinery. The issue is whether one who does undertake it should be stigmatized and the public penalized because of his service. Surely this is a position that perhaps the Shoe Machinery Company, but not the legal profession, can seriously maintain. By whomsoever maintained, it is a position which the United States Senate can be depended upon to reject.

The Attitude of the Middle West

FORTUNATELY or unfortunately, the opinion of the Middle West on matters of foreign policy differs markedly in degree—one might almost say in kind—from that prevailing on the Atlantic seaboard. To judge from the space allotted by Middle Western newspapers to the European war, interest in that great conflict is far less absorbing than it is in the coast cities. The problems confronting America, as a consequence of European belligerency, assume a correspondingly reduced importance. Shall we be denied our right, under international law, of travelling in merchant ships defensively armed? This is a vital question to New York and Boston, but to Cairo, Illinois, and Sioux City, Iowa, it is almost academic. Still more nearly academic is it to Fulton, Missouri, or Chamberlain, South Dakota. And the Middle West consists chiefly of Fultons and Chamberlains and lesser towns and hamlets. Will New York and Boston fight for the right to travel on armed ships? Perhaps. But Cairo and Sioux City, Chamberlain and Fulton, would rather postpone their trips to Europe to a more auspicious time.

The same difference in attitude manifests itself in the matter of our foreign commercial relations. These loom very large to New York and Boston. Here one gains almost the impression that the future of the United States lies upon the water. If we would be great our flag must float on every sea; American goods must penetrate to the inmost re-

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cesses of even the most backward countries; Americans must hold investments reading in terms of bolivars and sequins, taels and piastres. But in the view of the Middle Westerner, the substantial future of America lies in the Middle West. Foreign trade, he admits, is a convenience to us, and still more a convenience to our foreign customers, who never will be such fools as to cut it off. Do American merchants receive less favorable treatment than their British competitors in China or Chile? Let them come home, then, we have business enough of our own to keep them occupied; and let Chinese or Chileans come to us for such goods as they require.

Correlative with the differences in view as to the aims of foreign policy, we find differences in view as to the instruments of foreign policy—armaments. It is a seaboard opinion that we ought to have the biggest navy in the world and universal military service, just as it is a Middle Western opinion that we can rely for our defence upon the million men who would spring to arms on any fine day. To even a fairly cool-headed Easterner the danger of a foreign invasion seems serious. Only an extremely panicky Middle Westerner believes that such an event is probable. From the Easterner's point of view this divergence of opinion is a grave matter, for the Middle West is the great mother of congressmen. With the Middle West taking too short-sighted a view, how shall we escape disaster—borne in first instance by the East—if we are ever drawn into war?

The Middle West will not be cajoled or bullied out of its sense of security and its preference for isolation. Americans recently resident abroad have made missionary expeditions into the Middle West to set forth the humiliations to which they had been exposed on account of our pusillanimous foreign policy. The Middle West remained apathetic, surmising maliciously that many Americans abroad would rather be subjects than citizens. Call the Middle West smug, materialistic, local-minded, it retorts that the East is romantic when it is not designing.

We cannot have a vigorous foreign policy until we devise one that can command the interest of the Middle West. And to command such interest our policy must be characteristically American. The countries of Europe have tried out the foreign policy of power. There is nothing in the result to excite a desire for emulation in the prosperous Middle West. European nations have also tried out the foreign policy of imperialistic exploitation. Our Middle West is not attracted by such a policy. It does not love absentee landlordism at home; why did we fight to establish it in Cuba? The Middle West sees no reason why it should concern itself over the interests of the Standard Oil Company in Manchuria, after striving vainly for decades to kill that company. It is not disposed to back up franchise monopolies in Latin America and the Orient, since it has its energies sufficiently occupied with franchise monopolies of its own.

The Middle West does not wish the United States to dominate or to exploit, and if these are the essential aims of foreign policy, it wishes no foreign policy. What is more, it wishes no formidable armaments, for fear that it may inadvertently be dragged into the way of dominion and exploitation. If it is possible to elaborate a foreign policy that is calculated to advance the interests of the peoples with which we have dealings as well as our own, the Middle West will accept it eagerly. It does not believe that even our own democratic interest can be advanced except through mutual gain.

Suppose that in place of a policy of power our statesmen proposed to follow a policy of world peace, even through war if necessary. Would such a policy receive support in the Middle West? At least as earnest support as in the East. Suppose that in place of a policy of commercial exploitation, designed to secure preferential treatment and valuable concessions for our citizens, our statesmen offered a policy for the real development of backward regions through closely regulated American enterprise. Would the Middle West regard such a policy with aversion or even indifference? Certainly it would not. The Middle West prides itself especially on its missionary zeal. The extension of its own system of peace, democracy and diffused prosperity it would regard as worthy of extreme sacrifices. The cost of adequate armaments would be viewed in another light if such armaments might be regarded as instruments of a foreign policy making not for national or class aggrandizement but for the good of the world.

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The New Tactics at Verdun

A FRENCH military critic, after restating the now well-known fact that any front-line trench can be taken, wrote under date of January 29, 1916, as follows:

> " La conquête de la seconde position et des suivantes est possible pour les mêmes raisons et par les mêmes moyens que la conquête de la première, mais ces moyens, pour être mis en oeuvre, exigent du temps. La victoire ve sera probablement pas obtenue en rafale, en un jour. Elle resultera d'une série de bonds en avant, séparés par des intervalles suffisants pour permettre aux troupes de se refaire, aux réserves d'arriver, aux liaisons de s'établir, à la préparation d'artillerie de se renouveler.
>
> . . . La problème consiste simplement à reproduire, plusieurs, fois, à quelques jours d'intervalle, les mêmes conditions de succès.
>
> . . . Les Allemands, qui ont étudié de leur côté les conditions de la guerre moderne, le savent aussi bien que nous."

In view of the German offensive in the Verdun neighborhood, these words are prophetic. The armies of the Kaiser are not attempting to swarm through as Joffre tried to do in Champagne last September, as the English tried at Neuve Chappelle and Loos. They are not attempting to advance without proper artillery preparation, without detailed infantry reconnaissance, against partly unknown positions. They are moving forward, just as this critic suggests, by a series of jumps. There is nothing to interfere with the success of this method except a shaken morale or insupportable losses. There is nothing the matter with the morale of the German troops; there never has been. As regards losses, some time will be needed to prove whether or not they are too heavy. Moreover, there is another factor to be counted, the factor of counter attack. For there is nothing the matter with the morale of the French troops, either; and it is upon the morale of the armies that victory ultimately depends. Generals win battles, said Lord Kitchener, but soldiers win wars. No impressive superiority in morale has yet been noted on either side on the West front.

Remain the problems of organization, tactics and material. In organization, in the handling of reserves and in the precision of battalion or division movements, the Germans probably still enjoy a considerable advantage. During a general engagement such as is now taking place around Verdun, two factors of organization are imperative; it is necessary that troops should be reassembled quickly after or during the battle, for which a high measure of training is required, and reserves must be brought forward, when ordered, without delay. At Loos, according to the *Morning Post,* Sir Douglas Haig had under his command five or six divisions which he was never able to bring into the battle line at all. Reserve troops can only pass through a modern curtain of fire by marching under cover of a communication trench or sheltered road—a road crowded with ambulances, motor trucks, staff motors and artillery supplies. The handling of reserves behind the line, and the keeping intact of active units in the line, are questions of organization. In that the Germans still excel.

In *matériel*—in artillery and its accessories, in field telephones, aeroplanes, etc.—there is no longer much difference between the French and German armies. Possibly the Germans are still slightly superior in these departments, but even that is doubtful. As regards the tactical developments of trench warfare no soldier in all the world foresaw them. The Germans are learning every day, as are the French, new lessons in the field. As to whether Joffre or Falkenhayn has learnt most, time alone can tell.

Any first-line position can be taken; therefore any second-line position can be taken as well. But, says the French critic previously quoted, there is no such thing as a mathematically certain victory. What one can fairly say is that there is nothing to make it impossible or even improbable. One possesses the engines necessary to destroy the artificial defences of the enemy—*chevaux de frise,* barbed wire entanglements, steel or concrete shelters, trenches, etc. For this one needs a hurricane of fire, a spending of munitions which leaves far behind all prophecies of the days before the war, and weapons of a caliber hitherto unthought of. But one has all that. One obstacle alone appears still to be resisting attack, the machine gun, par excellence the arm of the defense, the most to be feared because of its murderous power and the ease with which it can be concealed. We do not know whether the offensive weapon against the machine gun, that is to say, a cannon powerful enough to pulverize a cement shelter, mobile enough to be brought into action under the fire of the machine gun itself, has yet been invented, but there is no doubt that this is one of the essential elements of the problem.

The foregoing was a competent French opinion for the 29th of January. Whether it can be considered a competent opinion on the 29th of Feb-

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ruary is another matter. General Joffre tried nibbling, and Falkenhayn nibbled too. Then Joffre tried to win by one tremendous impact. The impact did not succeed in breaking the German line. Now apparently the Germans are attempting a method between the two, the method of a series of jumps. It leaves room for serious counter attacks, as the recapture of positions has already proved. Its success depends on the staying power of German infantry and upon the mobility of infantry and artillery reserves. I have myself seen, at the beginning of the war, soft German troops on a forced march under heavy equipment, and reports to the contrary notwithstanding, their staying power has been proved over and over again. As at present organized, German infantry is the best in the world. But whether the mobility of reserves is sufficient to make this method a success is still in doubt. Last summer the German general staff officially stated, after Joffre's attack in Artois, that they (the Germans) now had it in their power to choose the moment when trench fighting would give place to open fighting. They are trying to-day to prove it. If they break through, they will have proved it.

" Il est bon," says the French critic, " de le dire aux gens qui, ayant une tendance à croire la trouée impossible, risquent de se décourager au premier temps d'arrêt que marquera l'offensive."

He thinks there must be intervals of two or three days to prepare for each new attack. This is probably true. The fighting should continue, off and on, for some time. If the Germans win—if they do actually break through—the French must in all likelihood retire all the way from Verdun to the Swiss border. If the Germans lose, it is not likely that they will make another such attempt, if ever, for months to come.

GERALD MORGAN.

Education in Taste

THERE is a naïvely systematic way of teaching artistic appreciation to the students of many of our city schools. To each class is allotted a famous painter. The class is then taken en masse to the art museum, and, under the guidance of one of the official show-women, confronted with the masterpieces of its proprietary genius. The children hear the dates of the painter's life, details of his career, the significance of his pictures, the particular beauties of his styles, and any other loose fragments of knowledge that may appeal to their guide. After they have been exposed long enough to the pictures to give confidence that appreciation has taken place in them, they are allowed to exchange painters with another class, and in rigid platoon proceed to appreciate their new idol in the same way. Presumably their appreciation finally flows over the entire museum, and they take their places among the cultivated of the land.

The other day in a New Jersey school I was shown some wall-paper designs that had just been made in a class of the youngest children. A simple figure had been given them with which to cover a sheet of paper in any pattern they chose. The thirty papers presented the most astonishing variety. They ranged from mere blotches to orderly and regular patterns. Some children had merely reproduced the figure in parallel lines across the paper. Others had alternated their lines and made a more pleasing scheme. Here was a living demonstration of the variety of artistic skill, but I was interested in appreciation. The teacher told me that she had pinned all the designs on the wall, and without any suggestion to the children had asked them to choose which they liked best. There had been a large consensus of liking for the alternate lines, the pattern which was obviously the most regular and the most pleasing.

In my museum system of class-painters who were to be duly " appreciated " I had a perfect example of the old unregenerate cult of the best. But my New Jersey school convinced me that these vestal virgins of the museums were guarding a decaying fane. The young teacher in the classroom had the beginnings of what would be a genuine education in taste. If that same critical and discriminating spirit could be carried forward with these littlest children all through their schooling, most of them would get a robust sense of values that would be spontaneous, that would never have to be cajoled, and that could not be threatened. Might not this process of refining taste be woven into our elementary education? Already we have it in these kindergartens and lower grades. It is a question of emphasis, of making the teachers see that the constant challenge to taste is one of the most important functions of the school. Types of school such as the Play-School make expression and selection the basis of their life. The most valuable feature of the Montessori school is the training of the senses, the quickening of response to sounds and colors and forms. Suppose a child were brought up from his earliest years in everyday contact with forms and colors, without its ever being hinted to him that some were " good " and others " bad." Suppose the child were urged to choose and to express his likes and dislikes, not giving his reasons but merely telling as he could what he saw or heard. Suppose this attempt were made through the course of his school life to clarify his appeals and repugnances, not by rationalizing them but by synthesizing them. Would not something like taste evolve out of it all?

Emphasis on what the pupil likes instead of what

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he ought to like would change the tone of school or college. The average mediocre student under our present regime gets an almost uncanny desire to do things "right." Since success in school depends on doing what the teacher thinks is right, education becomes on the child's part a technique of accurate guessing. Anyone who has spent much time in high schools knows how eagerly children will pounce on any official judgment concerning a book or person or picture or idea. The study of English classics in most schools becomes a festering bed of hypocrisy. And it is often the intrinsically amenable who are the most conscientious and who therefore most hopelessly overlay their own reactions with other people's judgments. The modern school recitation has degenerated into a skilful guessing on the part of the child of what the teacher "wants" him to say. And this is a symbol of the general attitude, in school and out, towards cultural things.

A laudable attempt has been made in the colleges to teach the student to think, but I wonder sometimes whether it has proceeded very far beyond encouraging him to find reasons for ideas and attitudes which he is persuaded he ought to have. For most college students it is already too late. Expression and discrimination are the last things which the primary and secondary schools have been emphasizing. The boy and girl come to college with no background of taste or selection, and the old docility, the old unconscious hypocrisy, must dog them all through their course. I would make a large part of the process of thinking in school and college the discovery of what one likes and wants, the control and direction of desire. Almost the whole object of education should be to know what one truly and wholeheartedly likes and wants.

Yet the modern school is just the place where this critical, discriminating attitude has a chance of being cultivated. The secret of all the current tendencies towards the "school of to-morrow" is the increasing participation of the children in the work of their own school. The Wirt plan, where the children help the mechanics decorate the rooms, and dramatize their school-life in auditorium exercises, perhaps carries this coöperation farthest, but in numberless schools that have shopwork, gardens, dramatizations, etc., the same evolution is apparent. Now every touch of dramatic, artistic and literary expression made by the children in the school affords material for education in taste. Expression and criticism play into each other's hands. Any expression which passes without a reaction from some part of this little school public is expression wasted. If the child does not learn in the school to observe and reflect upon and react to the expressive life that flows around him in the school, he will never react intelligently to anything outside the school. His childish criticism will of course be as elementary as the expression is elementary. But the emphasis of teachers should be there. Taste must flow naturally and spontaneously out of the experiences of everyday life.

Such an effort in the education of taste has a much better chance of success than has our traditional guidance. To impose canons on a younger generation, to make students appreciate the best in the arts, we need hosts of teachers who are finely tuned to these appreciations themselves, teachers whose tastes naturally coincide with what has been consecrated by time, and who can communicate their admirations. Experience has proved that we shall never have those hosts. We should never have enough Matthew Arnolds to go round. What art education suffers from in this country is teachers who have only the mechanics of appreciation without the inner glow. And it is futile to expect that we shall ever have enough with the classic inner glow. In this new direction, however, the teacher need not be mentor, but guide and provocative. Never being called upon to impart judgments or appreciations to the student, what he requires most is not judgments and appreciations of his own but curiosity as to the student's reactions. He need only be saying constantly to the student, what do you like and how does it compare with something else that you like? He need provide only the paraphernalia of art, the materials and processes, for the student to do his own work. If the teacher is of sound original taste, he can give the student criticism and aid him in his analysis and comparison. If he is not, he is at least prevented from hypocrisising the student's taste.

If this attitude became general in our aesthetic education, it would not be long before results became noticeable. We should get a variety of tastes —some of them traditional, some of them strange and new, but most of them at least spontaneous, indigenous. At present we have no way of knowing whether any particular manifestation of public taste is conventional, fashion-induced, imitative, or sincerely felt. Much spontaneous taste might turn out to be traditional. The majority of children trained in discrimination might prove to be incipient Brahmins. On the other hand we might get strange and vigorous expressions like the contemporary architecture and sculpture of Germany. I am assuming that taste and creation will fertilize each other. For this fertilization we must have a liberation of taste from the sterile control of the "best." This does not mean that every person would become endowed with original taste, but that we should have a chance to find original taste out. We should have done all within human power to create public taste, as our present ideal does everything to

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prevent it. As a result we should have a chance of some kind of integrated culture. In each art we might find several very strongly marked directions of style and taste which should appeal to different people. It would then be the task of criticism not to choose between them but to discover their sincerity and significance. Style is a matter of right relations. Things have style when their parts make each other and the whole significant. Indigenous style is the only art that really means anything. Out of an education in taste will grow creative art as a flower from rich soil.

RANDOLPH BOURNE.

The New Manner in Modern Poetry

WE hear so much about "the new poetry" to-day, and see it so injudiciously lauded in publishers' catalogues, and so non-understandingly reviled and jeered at in the daily press, that it is no wonder if most people think it a mere advertising term, with no basis in fact.

This is most unfair and uncritical, for there is a "new manner" in the poetry of to-day which sets it quite apart from the poetry immediately preceding it. I am not referring to the extreme fads so prevalent in Europe before the war, such as futurism, headed by Marinetti, with its pronunciamento that verbs should only be used in the infinitive, and its algebraic signs of "plus" and "minus," etc., to eke out a language it had intentionally impoverished; or "Fantaisisme," with Guillaume Appolinaire as chief priest, who wrote so-called "ideographic poetry," or poems printed so as to represent a picture of a railroad train with puffing smoke, or some other thing of the sort. That these "notions" (to borrow a phrase from the country shopkeeper) will survive the war is inconceivable, but that the real, sane "new manner" will persist cannot admit of a doubt. For the new manner is not a dress assumed at will, it is the result of changed surroundings, of a changed attitude toward life.

The "new manner" is made up of so many elements that to give all these elements one specific name is a little difficult, but elsewhere I have called it "externality," and that name will quite suffice to show its antagonism to the "internality" which is the most marked quality in the poetry of the 'nineties.

There is not space in a brief paper to show the steps by which poetry arrived at the introspective state against which the "new manner" is a protest. That the poets of the late Victorian epoch were extraordinarily subjective, no one will deny. And this subjectivity led to a refining and ever refining upon their emotions, until the emotions themselves became somewhat tenuous. With this, growing all the time, went a most beautiful technique. There seems to have been something a little faded about these men; perhaps jaded would be a better term. Were they really so melancholy, or was it just a fashion? Some of them were pensively sad, some were despairingly enraged, they looked at grey and old-rose landscapes and sighed a languid appreciation, or they whipped up their jaded mental appetites with minute descriptions of artificial, insinuated suggestions of quite ordinary vulgarities. But whatever they did they made beautiful, literary backgrounds for a gigantic ego. Each man's ego was swollen to a quite abnormal size, and he was worshipped by his other self, the author, with every conceivable literary device and subtlety.

Egoism may be a crime in the world of morals, but in the world of the arts it is perfectly permissible. It makes very good and very interesting poetry. In mentioning it I am not condemning it, I am only labelling it. It was the manner of the 'nineties, it is not the manner of to-day.

Now, by "externality" I mean the attitude of being interested in things for themselves and not because of the effect they have upon oneself. The poet of the "new manner" paints landscapes because landscapes are beautiful, not because they chime with his mood. He tells stories because stories are interesting, and not to prove a thesis. He writes narrative poems because his range embraces the world and is not confined to himself. He is ironic, grotesque, ugly at times, because he has the feeling of the universality of life.

Some critics are forever measuring the modernity of poetry by what they call its "social consciousness." When a poet really writes in the "modern manner," social consciousness becomes one facet of his feeling of universality. The greater includes the less, and "externality" includes the universe and everything in it. But Milton and Dante were universal, it may be said, were they therefore modern? Certainly not. They were universal, but they were not "external." Man stuck out in high relief all over their work. Man and his destiny—man completely out of focus, in short—was their theme. The "new manner" attempts to put man in his proper place in the picture; that is why it is so at variance with the method of the so-called "cosmic" poet.

Now "externality" shows itself in two ways: in choice of subject matter, and in treatment; and this last again may be subdivided into general arrangement and ordering of particulars, and style.

First, as to subject matter. "Externality" is the main trend of the "new manner," but of course that

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does not mean that no poet ever writes subjective verses. He could hardly be universal if he excluded himself. It is a fact, however, that modern poetry of the new kind does not concern itself primarily with introspection.

Another characteristic of the "new manner" is humor. Pensive melancholy is no longer inevitably to be worn, like a badge of office. It has gone, with many other obvious fripperies, such as leonine hair and visioning eyes. Is it because poets are more sincere to-day, that they have less "side?" I do not know, but certainly in the 'nineties, in England at least, they were a very carefully put together lot. It is this sincerity, I believe, which has brought back humor. To many poets of the preceding generation, melancholy must have been a fashion. I really think that if there is a fashion to-day it is sincerity.

Another striking tendency of the "new manner" is its insistence upon the poetry in unpoetic things. The new poet is never tired of finding colors in a dust-heap, and shouting about them. Sometimes the colors so occupy him that he takes them separately, unrelated to the dust-heap, as it were. This taking colors, and light and shade, in planes and cubes, with practically no insistence on the substances which produce them, be they men or houses or trees or water, is often called futurism by the ignorant. Probably because the real futurists, Marinetti and his followers, never employ it.

The poets of the "new manner" have another distinguishing mark. They endeavor to write poetry in the syntax of prose. Inversions are abhorrent to them, except when used purposely for accent. They try to write in the ordinary phrase construction of everyday speech and make it poetry just the same. How difficult this is, only those who have tried it know. When at a loss for a rhyme they do not permit themselves to drop suddenly into a simile for three lines—a cunning simile, neatly devised to give the necessary rhyme. They use colloquial language; "poetic diction" has sunk into ill repute, only newspaper poets and their ilk employ it. Poets no longer "fain" to do anything, nor "ope" their eyes to the "ethiope splendor of the spangled night," when "they themselves have lain upon a couch to woo reluctant slumber."

Still a third characteristic is the presentation of facts and images without comment. If there is one thing which the "new manner" is more against than another, it is preaching in a poem. And this care not to point a moral is one of the most pronounced features of the "new manner." It is this very thing which leads so many poetry lovers of the older generation to find it cold. An old-fashioned editor once said to me that what he missed in modern poetry was its lack of noble thoughts. The poetry which is a pepsin to weak intellects to whom crude life is indigestible, has nothing in common with the "new manner." "Noble thoughts," neat little uplift labels wrapped in the tinfoil of pretty verse, has its place in the scheme of existence, no doubt, but to the modern poet it is anathema. He seeks to give life, the world, as it is, as he sees it, at any rate; and the lesson of his poem, if there be one, must be inherent in the poem itself. He takes the intelligence of his readers for granted, and trusts to their getting the meaning of the poem as it unfolds, refusing to bellow it at them through a megaphone in impertinent asides.

Why do people refuse to take art as organic, and insist upon considering it as merely explanatory? When these same people walk in the garden on a fine morning, do they feel chilled and depressed because the little flower-buds are not tagged with texts? But there! We shall never agree, and for people who like to be drugged with fine, conventional sentiments there is no cure in heaven or earth, that I am aware of.

Now as to form. It is the belief of most people that interest in metrical experiments is a distinguishing feature of the "new manner." But do you suppose that there has ever been a time when real poets were not interested in metrical experiments? Poets have been widening and deepening and freeing their prosody ever since there was a prosody to tinker with. In experimenting, the modern poet is merely following tradition.

As the word "new" has been "wished on" to contemporary poetry, so are its metrical experiments dubbed and condemned as "new." *Vers libre* in particular is constantly called "new" and hooted at; or poets who employ it are told that they think it is new, and it is not. Of course it is not, only the paragraph writers in the newspapers ever supposed it was. So far as I know, the only metrical experiment which is in the least new is "polyphonic prose," and that had its beginnings in France, in the work of Gustave Kahn, and Saint-Pol-Roux, and Paul Fort. I believe I am the first poet who has ever employed it in English, and it had to be so adapted in bringing it over from one language to another that it only retains a partial resemblance to the French form.

Now the "new manner" does not consist solely in any one of these characteristics; it consists in all. Some poets have one of them, some another; it may be subject, it may be form. The "new manner" is as characteristic as the manner of differing peoples. All Americans are not alike, but all Americans have something which sets them together, and apart from other nationalities. So the change in poetry is easily distinguished. And it is an inevitable change, reflecting the evolution of life.

AMY LOWELL.

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The World's Worst Failure

(VI) Scarlet Berries

I HAVE tried to tell how the elegant woman is but the shadow of a man that vanishes into nothingness when the candle of his interest in her is blown out. I have told how women infected with elegance hand down the bad tradition in our schools and teach girls to live not for life's sake but to be desired. I have told how elegance makes women dangerous as producers, because they stand tittering together when they should be joined in labor's fierce fight to wrest industry from the hands of men maddened by ownership, and not less dangerous as consumers because they demand luxuries that confuse the economic arrangements of the earth and keep them from the concentration upon life which is the necessary prelude to genius. I have told how elegance softens women's will so that they cannot brace themselves to the hard decisions which are the gates to a glorious life or death. To every woman who desires her sex to be more than a perishable article hawked to uneager buyers at a penny plain and twopence pretty, who would have her sex engage in humanity's conspiracy to thrust order on the dark disordered universe, elegance is the enemy.

The half of the world that despises women thinks of this preoccupation with elegance as a pastime which keeps them quiet and does not overstrain the mechanism of their intelligence. And the other half, that believes women to be capable of all honor, has been divided by the circumstances of the feminist movement into two parties which on different grounds deny the existence of the problem. There is the grimmer type of feminist acidulated by controversy like milk soured by jolting, who scowls at the suggestion that anything upheld by a large number of women can possibly be wrong, and remarks tartly that men have been known to take thought over the crease in their trousers. On the same line of argument one might defend foot-binding; and if the assumption that everything about women is perfect were correct we would have no need for their further emancipation. There is the other type of feminist whom controversy has made not grim but evasive, and who, instead of admitting the justice of the anti-suffragist's claim that free women will cease to be pretty toys for men and pointing out how bad it is to be or have a pretty toy, tries to confute it by a decorative existence. Thus it was that Miss Christabel Pankhurst belied her physical courage and her administrative ability by smiling fluffily at audiences over Annunciation lilies; and thus it was that Mrs. Philip Snowden, a woman as shrewd as a horse-dealer, would appear before a working-class audience in the Potteries to plead the cause of free and responsible womanhood in a shining satin robe and a prodigious hat of ostrich feathers that were higher than anything else in the Five Towns except the factory chimneys and her own heels. It was this acceptance of emphatic garnishings of the self as part of the campaign that brought the suffrage movement to the egotism and dashing autocracy of which it died; and that so many intelligent women fell before it is an indication of how lightly the world takes elegance. What more is elegance, it asks, than the modern manifestation of the eternal instinct of the female to attract the male? Didn't the cave woman twine scarlet berries in her hair as she sat by the fire and waited for her mate?

The instinct of the female to attract the male is life's first essential, now, as it was in the beginning; but that does not sanctify all the botched work the instinct does when it works through imperfect instruments. Half our legislation is directed towards checking and confining to legitimate channels the developments of instincts the free play of which was absolutely necessary to humanity at its birth. The desire of the strong man to set weaker men to work and to fight according to his wiser will was a sword in the hand of life so long as man was wresting a habitation from wild nature. But when that desire leads men of our time to send children into the mines of Silesia or the mills of South Carolina or the sweated home industries of England, then it becomes a sword in the side of life. Similarly the rightness of the cave woman when she twined scarlet berries in her hair does not imply the rightness of the London lady who spends five guineas on a petticoat or a hundred guineas on an evening cloak. Indeed the cave woman must start in her long sleep when the lady passes over her dust, as at some delicate white beast of prey that tracks the children descended from her body, that leaps upward at the torch of life she lit. For in her time she too had the capacity for dreaming of the future that shines in the brain of humanity like a jewel in the head of a toad. At night she lay awake while her mate slept, watched the firelight playing on the walls, listened to the howling of the wolves. "When all the wolves are dead," she used to think, "how good life will become! My man and I will walk where we will in the forest, and we will be great friends, and very tender and wise with each other. And what chil-

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dren we shall rear, when I know all the magic herbs that cure their sickness and they need never die of famine!" With such dreams she smiled and slept.

Well, all the wolves are dead. But women do not yet walk freely with men in the forest. Most men bid them not gad about looking for wisdom and tenderness but stay by the camp-fire twining scarlet berries in their hair; and most women obey. And children still die from famine and sickness, for the world seeks more busily for more scarlet berries than for food and healing herbs. But, bitterest of all to the dead cave woman, though the world has concentrated so extravagantly upon the adornments she invented, it has forgotten the meaning that set her whole body glowing as her fingers twined them in her hair. Those berries were the badge of courage of the heart and of the body; they were an invitation to love and motherhood. These things have had no deadlier foe than elegance.

For love is a journey into a new country; and like any other journey its length depends entirely on what the country has to show. There should be woods with silent undergrowth, where comfort lives; bright rivers of vitality; clean cities built on foundations of fine tradition and splendid with the towers of learning and religion; green fields where simple thought and senses play like young cattle, and mountains so high that as one climbs one breathes quickening air not known to ordinary men—so high that by day the earth lies clear beneath like an open map, and by night the stars are just beyond arms' length above. In such a country a man can live forever.

With an elegant woman love is little more than a visit to Trouville: there is a bright little place and a bright little restaurant and a bright little casino—a tiny pocket of public brightness in the blackness of an unexplored, uncomprehended world. Of such a visit a man wearies and goes on, suffering a depreciation of his value not only as a lover but as a human being, because the transference of love blunts the nerves, and the beloved admits another man to her inadequate love and starts upon a cycle of humiliations. At best they commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the sin of being contented with little things, and cling to this frail perch above the perilous universe, when it is the plain duty of every human being to build himself a surer stronghold. Even so they are not safe, for the limits of the earth's productivity may at any moment turn their relationship into a wrangle. "Beware," said Mohammed to his followers, "of marrying a toadstool woman, a woman that sits and sits, and spends all thy substance on jewels and perfumes and rich stuffs . . ."

Nor do the arms of the elegant woman carry her lover's child more safely than his soul, for she is altogether at odds with life and will not bear burdens at its will. It is the physical aim of life to be fragile, to be so little that a man could pick one up in his arms; and like the lap-dog, the lap-woman can only be produced by interfering with the way of nature. In that age of elegance, the reign of Marie Antoinette, the waists of women were like the stalks of flowers; as women are not flowers but human beings of a solidity suited to the adventures of humanity, this appearance was contrived by means of cruel gripping stays. That this period of crippled bodies was also the period of weakly babies carelessly handed over to peasant foster-mothers is the sign of a universal truth. Wherever women concentrate upon sex they fail at it. If we look to the East, where decorated women sit apart and seal up their souls to all but love, we think how fertile a land it should be that is watered by such a reservoir of grace. And true it is that children are there brought proudly into the world; for it is something to do in the scented dulness of the harem, and a baby is a sweet toy to play with. But their pride will not lift these women to the sterner task of keeping them in the world. So the babies slip, wailing, back; pushed out of life by bad feeding, by fever ill-tended, by infection cheerfully conveyed in ignorance, by sanitation never protested against.

We look from that so carelessly accepted motherhood to the too carelessly rejected motherhood of the luxurious West, and we see that feminists can submit to the test of their theory against which in the earlier days of the movement they used to rebel. Those of us who believe that women should play their part in the intellectual and industrial process of the world can admit that the condition of the child is a test of the rightness of the position of woman; indeed we are anxious that it should be taken so. We know that the woman the windows of whose soul are blocked by mirrors cannot look out at the world and love it so that she desires to maintain it by her body; and the Western birth-rate and the Eastern infant-mortality rate prove our case. We can show that she fulfils no function save, by her costliness, her public exquisiteness, her incapacity for revolt, to satisfy the sense of propriety; and that—grievously cries out the poor social system, so rotted by poverty and prostitution—should not glut itself with human beings. This is the chief cause of joyousness in the feminist movement. The freedom that feminists desire will not be a wrenching away to personal freedom from the immemorial duties of women; it will be an added strength of function, another sinew that shall make the arm of humanity, as it brings down the hammer of its will on the world, mould it more beautifully than it had ever dared to think.

REBECCA WEST.

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The Community Brain

"I DON'T believe," said Holmes, flicking the ash from his cigar, "that there is any great hope for us as a democratic nation until we become more firmly grounded in the philosophy of common denominators."

"Holmes," I said solemnly, "that sentence is worthy of a German professor. What, pray, does it mean?"

"It means simply this, my son. It means, first of all, as Faguet put it in that biting little book of his, that democratic government is a 'cult of incompetence.'"

"Faguet certainly had it in for democracy," I replied. "And so you've decided with the biting Frenchman that we must turn aristocrats; that's what you mean?"

"Wait till I finish," said Holmes. "It's one thing to be dissatisfied with democratic government as it's now organized. It's quite another to be dissatisfied with democracy."

"I stand corrected," I replied, "and I agree thoroughly about the cult of incompetence. My own pet horror, Holmes, is Albany. Once in a while, when I want to make myself vividly aware of my blessings, I imagine myself compelled to hand over to an Albany bunch some big project in which I am interested—some project requiring insight and broad vision. It's the greatest stimulus to personal thanksgiving that I know."

"Albany governs us," said Holmes.

"So much the worse for us," I replied.

"But Albany is selected to govern us."

"So much the worse for the selecting."

"Precisely. That's what I meant when I said a moment ago that as a democratic nation we weren't firmly enough grounded in the philosophy of common denominators."

"Explain," I said.

"It's perfectly simple," said Holmes. "Take two numbers—36, say, and 24. The greatest common denominator is 12. Add another number, say 42. The greatest common denominator now is 6. Add still another—21. The denominator reduces to 3. Add another—13. It reduces to 1. The more the numbers and the more various, the smaller the greatest common denominator becomes.

"That's true, isn't it? Now simply change the numbers into people, and the entire matter becomes plain. Take, for example, two people of the same education, occupation and general environment. Their common denominator—the ground, that is, of their common understanding, their common agreement—is relatively large. They have all sorts of things in common. They understand each other; they can range over broad fields in their talk with each other; their agreements are wide and significant.

"Now take these same two people—physicians, say—and add a merchant to their number. At once the field of common understanding shrinks. Add a barber. It shrinks still more. Add a grocer, a peanut vender, an expressman, a saloonkeeper, a garbage collector. By the time you've got all your fifty-seven varieties of human creatures in, the field of common understanding has shrunken almost to a pin-point."

"And so?" I said.

"The curious thing is that we don't see it," said Holmes; "particularly in our big cities. We assemble the fifty-seven varieties and bid them express their 'common will' in the selection of someone to represent them. What type of men do they select? Not the type of men that physicians would select if they could have their sole say; not the type that scientists would select, or merchants, or engineers. They select men—there is no help for it under the present order of things—acceptable to the whole motley crowd; the men, in short, who are the greatest common denominators of the crowd. They're our politicians.

"I have no aristocratic scorn of the crowd," Holmes continued. "But I don't believe—no one does when he comes to consider it—that crowd psychology is a particularly effective type of psychology for the government of life. For think of what we lose by it. Here is a group of physicians. They have knowledge of much that concerns the public welfare, they have a point of view that is vital to society. But that knowledge and that point of view are never really given a chance to express themselves in government. In a sense, of course, they are allowed to express themselves—through health boards—but never in broad social ways—in the general get-up of a city, parks, recreation and educational work and so on. When the time comes to select the men who are to look after these broad social matters, the physicians must be content to choose someone acceptable likewise to Peter McCluskey the expressman, and Antonio Carducci the street-sweeper—to choose, in short, a miserable makeshift of a common denominator. And it is just as bad for Peter and Antonio. They too know things; they too as groups have points of view—not as intelligent, perhaps, but of value if they could get expressed. But the Antonio and the Peter groups are sunk in a general mass which really has no distinctive point of view at all.

"The fact is," said Holmes with emphasis, "we haven't yet really learned how to tap the brain of the community. That's our trouble. Brains are simply points of view, ways of looking out at life

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and the world. The housewife has her way of looking out, a way that is of prodigious concern to a society. Isn't it stupid to make no use of it, to refuse to encourage its self-expression, to say to housewives: no, you, like everyone else, must be sunk in the general mass, and a cheap lawyer in the legislature must say for you what in his genial imbecility he thinks you might want to say. Why not say rather to the housewives—and likewise to teachers and physicians and artisans and merchants: we *want* this perfectly vital thing that you, as a group, have to offer, this experience, this ripened judgment. We want this ripened judgment of yours to match up with the ripened judgment of other groups; we ask you therefore, as a group, to select the persons competent to express your judgment; and we ask that these persons, these bigger common denominators, be the operative brains of our social life. That's the point: to get great big common denominators—as big as we can get them. And there's only one way to do it—to find the groups where there really is some measure of common experience and common judgment and make these groups our political units."

"Our social brain-centers," I suggested.

"Exactly," said Holmes. "Think of what our 'official' brain-centers are now. Districts and precincts! Square miles of space inhabited by heterogeneous crowds of beings having nothing deeply and continuously in common! It's preposterous. The true social brain-center is the group that functions in common, that has interests and knowledge in common. Until we tap such centers as these, we shall remain as we now are, socially and politically brainless."

"With Albany politicians," I said.

"And worse," said Holmes.

H. A. OVERSTREET.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sincerest Flattery

SIR: Stirred by the experience of Miss Rebecca West as recorded in your issue for February 19th, I began to inquire within me as to the proper mode of falling into something that is not a dream, with such results that I presently fell, quite perceptibly, through something that was probably not space, into an agricultural area that had once been the home of noble tribes, though I could see that it had absolutely forgotten the occurrence.

Although the skies had been reduced by the heat to a liquid condition, that is, become molten, the hall was cool, probably on account of the snow which had been brought in that day for the sake of the fruit. Hands were being hands in a way that involved much flashing of jewels, and eyes were being eyes in a way that involved incessant skipping about, though they always returned to their sockets, with a sudden violence, like an old-fashioned door-bell. The child sat on the floor and looked at the Jew, who was standing behind a curtain. (No child and no Jew have been mentioned before, but in these old visions they do not have to be.) She accomplished this by cocking her head *down;*—for it was her pleasure in this house to do simple, childlike things such as handing around glasses of water to the public speakers. A boy entered somewhat musically, for he wore a coat that had an air and could set a note very prettily. The boy did not want to eat anything. He looked hungry, but he had something on his mind. He was waiting to hear the child speak. Tears of disappointment came to his eyes, and eventually dripped. The child whispered; she quavered; she blurted; later, she breathed; and not long after, she murmured. The silence throbbed, but she never spoke. The child had an all-day sucker, and this may have been the reason for her peculiar processes of articulation. There was some fruit with stones in it—just three each—and the children, now friends, amused themselves, like surgeons counting sponges, by making sure that each fruit had its three stones. Still later, after a good many eyes had looked on, by way of being the Jew's or rats' or stars', sleep came, and afterward they yawned, rubbed their eyes, and went up-stairs.

The next scene was full of color—crimson, golden, tawny, blue and green. The enemy had come in the night, showing their teeth like a dentist's advertisement or a snarling wolf. The boy had managed to get hold of a sword, laws about weapons in the hands of minors not being very strict then, and he gave it to the child, who couldn't have been more than eight or ten. He himself, by the way, was murdered about that time. The child was left with a man coming toward her, from whom she was divided by her childhood in everything except sight. According to Hoyle, she ought to have pierced herself with the sword. As she lifted it, it turned into a simile, flowery, and shaped like a girdle. She clasped it about her waist. She had read about it in the Book of the Seven and Seventy Figures of Speech. She had a sense of elegance. Henceforth, figures of speech were to be her weapons. She might neither live nor die. She became mere words.

Quite irrelevantly it came to me, as I surveyed that agricultural, florescent tract, that a schoolmistress had taught me to love elegance: of style.

A SCHOOLMISTRESS.

Brookline, Massachusetts.

Likes His Greek in English

SIR: "The Classical Compromise" in your issue of January 29th prompts me to illustrate Mr. Cohn's excellent outline of the situation with a word as to my personal experience.

I had no opportunity to learn either Latin or Greek. My interest in classical literature was first awakened by the reading of a little of Pope's Homer in school. Afterward I obtained some of the ordinary literal versions of Sophocles and Æschylus, and even these let a little of the glory shine through. Later I learned that translations differ in value, and by referring to the opinions of compe-

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tent scholars I was able to find the best. These translations were continual sources of joy and inspiration, and for long I deeply regretted my ignorance of the classical languages; but I came to realize that of all the persons I met who could read Greek and Latin, very few felt any considerable enthusiasm for classical literature. The task of acquiring the language had dulled them to the things which the language expressed. While no doubt there are beauties in the originals which no translation reproduces adequately, so much is reproduced, so much of beauty and truth in the lack of which I should be infinitely poorer, that I do not so much regret that I did not spend years frowning over Greek verbs.

Certainly the cultural value of classical literature will never make itself felt through the perfunctory study of the languages which suffices to carry the average student through his examinations. That is nothing but a task, which seems to leave no permanent benefit behind. In this country education is aiming more and more at utilitarian results. A change will have to come if we are to retain those intellectual graces without which a people becomes sordid and coarse. No better step could be taken toward inculcating that spirit which looks beyond mere material considerations, than for our instructors to turn from the letter which has killed to the spirit which will revive the love and the inspiration of classical literature.

PAUL R. BIRGE.

Washington, D. C.

The Reply to Mr. Gompers

The following letter should be read in connection with the letter from Mr. Gompers printed in the issue of February 19th, and should have appeared at that time. THE NEW REPUBLIC *regrets its omission.*

Chicago, Ill., Feb. 12, 1916.

Samuel Gompers, Esq.,
President, American Federation of Labor.

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for your long letter, stating your position. I realize that your time is occupied and I do not mean to trespass upon it far; but I cannot leave you with the impression that I think as I do and acted as I did—and should again—in regard to the strike of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, because I had no knowledge of the situation or had not thought about it at all or was prompted by emotional sympathy alone. I simply differ from you in the assumption that one "secession" must be just like another. I do not accept your parallel example in the secession of the Southern States from the Union, which was a secession of a minority to perpetuate a wrong; whereas the secession of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers from the United Garment Workers was a secession of a majority and to do away with a wrong. I do not know why one should not refer as well to the example of the secession of the Colonies or, if you please, of the American Federation of Labor from the Knights of Labor.

I respectfully offer these substitute examples for your consideration. The "power to discriminate between things which are different" (somebody has said that it is next to the grace of God) seems to me to be as much needed in a great labor leader as in other great leaders of men. Exactly cut-out patterns and phrases will not cover all human situations, and from time to time a great human crisis will develop beyond the bounds of formula. The power to discern and utilize greatness in others—is it not a very important factor in greatness?

Begging your indulgence for this second trespass upon your time,

Yours for the fuller rights of Organized Labor,
ELLEN GATES STARR.

P. S. Somebody to whom I have read this correspondence has suggested the usefulness of publishing it. I assume that you would not object as it is not private in its nature.

No Ideal President Could Ever Be

SIR: Ever since I became a close reader of THE NEW REPUBLIC I have often had the impulse to take up the cudgels with you on the attitude expressed in some of your editorials. And by the way, concerning "aggressive leadership," has it ever occurred to you that it would be more aggressive and leader-like to sign your editorials with at least the initials of the writer?

On the whole, I am in most hearty and enthusiastic agreement with your conception of the meaning of American democracy, and with your efforts to advance a policy of "mastery" rather than "drift." I agree with you that America is not yet really a nation, but a heterogeneous mass of local and individual selfishness and prejudice, crisscrossed by religious and clique interests. The matter on which I am taking present issue with you is your attitude toward the Wilson administration.

With all agreement with you that our present need is a truly national leader, that obviously impossible combination of agitator-statesman, I submit that it is impractical, if not unfair, to demand that a President of the United States take upon himself the fight for measures necessary for realizing the vision of an "integrated democracy." We who have the vision and believe that we see at least the outlines of the method for its accomplishment, are very naturally impatient and intolerant of the stupidity and two-by-four conceptions of petty Congressmen. But the significant thing is that these gentry fairly represent their constituents, and it is upon the votes of these constituents that the administration in power has to depend for continuance of that power. Upon such continuance depends the accomplishment of the program which has been begun. I have no doubt but that there is a considerable following for the new nationalism, but that this is a majority of the voting population, or even within shouting distance of it, you surely do not for a moment contend. Do you think it reasonable to expect Mr. Wilson to jeopardize all further possibility of accomplishing legislation immediately pressing? Do you think it would be statesmanlike in him to run the risk?

It is my conviction that were Mr. Wilson to take up the measures which a truly national program demands he would infallibly be defeated in the election this fall. You know well that whatever course he might take up, his opponents would seek to make an issue of its opposite, for the Republicans are as far as the Democrats from any positive issue. In fact, they seem to be waiting to see what the latter will advocate, so that they themselves may advocate the opposite. Probably we need some able man who will so sacrifice his prospects of any immediate accomplishment for the sake of crystallizing a genuine national program, but we have never yet had any such man for a leader, in

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the Capitol or out of it. The people have to be led into sacrifice of liberty very slowly and mostly without knowing exactly what they are doing, or they will not go. They mostly sense intuitively that there is an essential conflict between efficiency and the happiness of freedom without fear. Not yet having the intelligence to master efficiency and use it, they are naturally afraid of becoming its slaves.

C. L. VESTAL.

Chicago, Illinois.

For Neutral Forbearance

SIR: It is with much interest that I note the pros and cons of President Wilson's efforts in the European and Mexican conditions, and to the would-be advisors I suggest the test, "Put yourself in his place," and with all seriousness "wonder" what to do. Suppose the President should exact of Germany, England or Mexico that certain acts must cease, and said country assumes an opposite view —what then? No reasonable person would suppose that we could simply "stroll over" and make either country accept our views.

The question has often arisen as to the "rights of neutrals" on the seas and in foreign territory. In my opinion the primary consideration should be the effect an act might have on one's country; in other words I personally might feel that as a neutral I have the right to go into Mexico, when the reflex thought should have made me consider whether by so doing I might involve my country in war, the paramount duty being to my country first.

In event that this country should be drawn into war, I would like to ascertain just how many "agitators" would enlist for real fighting. Of those advocating intervention in Mexico I wonder if they have for a moment viewed the serious phase, or if they presume that all we will have to do is step across the border and thrash them and return in time for supper. Divided as they may seem, I predict that under American intervention they will be like unto a covey of quail, "all together by morning"; and with a population approximating fifteen millions, eleven millions of which are ignorants and half-breeds, the unthinking may form some idea of the proposed game of intervention. In times of war the army and navy do not need agitators; fighting soldiers are required for success. In these troublesome times we should with one accord heartily commend a President who has kept us out of trouble.

MARTIN L. CALHOUN.

Selma, Alabama.

Play-Censoring in America

SIR: In your issue of February 19th you ask editorially "on what principle censorship is being guided in the American theatre." You answer that it is guided in obedience to the pressure of "certain powerful organizations." And you add that "unless the offense reacts unwholesomely on the whole public there should be no restriction." The cause of the editorial is the suppression of "Marie-Odile" and the "pruning" of the Russian Ballet.

Consider this case: A question is brought before ten people. Four vote yes, two vote no, four who are on the negative follow a tradition of aloofness and do not vote at all. The yes's have it, but obviously they do not represent the sentiment of the majority of the ten; they are then a fictitious majority. Personally I think that they deserve to win. Now is not this pressure of certain organizations, in the case of "Marie-Odile" for instance, clearly the pressure of a fictitious majority? And is it astonishing or in the least to be regretted that in a democracy this majority should be obeyed? What happened was this: A mediocre play was produced. The majority of the people who for various reasons took an interest in it condemned it. They were not the "whole public," but they were a fictitious majority. The play was withdrawn. For the whole point of producing a play is to please this restricted audience, and if it is condemned by it it must fail, unless there be another and opposite group equally influential for it to cater to. And it is a waste of time for the unorganized majority to grumble. Their only course is to become the active majority.

I have taken for granted that men will always stop a thing that they dislike if they have the power to stop it. It is the negative power of democracy. And since it is the basis of the system, it is bewildering to find democrats who wonder at it. Intolerance is unreasonably despised when it should be admired as the spirit which makes possible the clash of ideas. And until you have the clash of ideas and the heat of struggle you can have no progress. In America, heaven knows, there are few enough rows about plays. For we do not take them with the seriousness of the French, who fight in the streets over them and who drive players from the stage if they dislike what they say. And so, far from viewing with concern the intolerance of these "certain organizations," anyone who really wishes for progress should be cheered by the sight of their meddling, since an attack invariably brings a defense, and in the fight there is a burning away of trivialities and a generating of ideas. As for "Marie-Odile," it is hardly more than a clumsy crib from Boccaccio's delightful and disgusting story, "Putting the Devil into Hell," the story so beloved by naughty schoolboys; and Mr. Knoblauch has, in my opinion, only spoilt it.

C. G. PAULDING.

Brookline, Massachusetts.

Southern Blood Speaks Heatedly

SIR: Mr. Walter C. Hunter in the issue of February 5th seems to be troubled with an attack of ante-bellum New England conscience. Are there still people that believe in the racial equality of the negro? Would he be willing for a sister of his to marry a negro, or be doctored by one? To a Southerner the idea is too repulsive for words. The negro has always been a servile race since the time of Noah's curse of servility on Ham. The highest civilization that they ever attained was in the Moors, and when they intermarried with the Spaniards they lost the best characteristics of both races. The same is true of the mulatto.

No one denies that the position of the ambitious negro is a pitiful one, but are we willing to lower the standard of the white race so as to raise the negro? It has been demonstrated that the fusion of the two races generally produces a sort of mongrel conglomeration. What we want to strive for is more race purity, instead of letting down the bars.

If the New Republic that you are trying to build is one of mulattoes, I suppose that you will not publish this letter.

JNO. MARSHALL EWING.

Crescent View, Tennessee.

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Straight from China

SIR: It is surprising that even in this modern age of rapid communication and the increasingly rapid transmission of news, one part of the globe is still no less ignorant of what actually happened to other parts than in the days of yore. The more surprising is the fact that when I read "Advice to China" in THE NEW REPUBLIC of November 20th, 1915, the article came from the pen of a self-styled Sinologue! I have no curiosity to know the name of this gentleman who, I presume, reads up every day the latest news from the Far East, absorbs all the superficial articles on China in the popular monthlies, and then perhaps at some moment of excitement pours out by writing what he has consumed and what he imagines to be. Indeed, the writer is not to be blamed for his indiscretion, for almost any writer nowadays in treating a subject likes to assume a presumptuous and authoritative manner. But it is certainly deplorable that the writer should have called himself "Sinologue." Rather keep your public uninformed than to keep it falsely informed.

In outline the "Sinologue's" article amounts to this: China wants a strong centralized government because that would be able to conciliate rival factions, guilds and societies of the country; Yuan Shi Kai realized this fact and he has been dominant ever since the early days of the Revolution; the question of succession might involve China again in trouble and this might easily be obviated by adopting a monarchical form of government; Japan has always been directly or indirectly connected with China's internal affairs since the dismissal of Yuan Shi Kai under the Manchu dynasty, and this time any kind of unrest that eventually happens may be inspired by Japan; what will actually happen remains to be seen. And the writer apologizes for Yuan on the ground that the intrigues were necessary.

Now let me come straight to the question in refuting the points our "Sinologue" has raised. I am not arguing whether this or that form of government is good for China, nor do I intend to howl down Yuan Shi Kai as an arch-traitor of the nation. Let us be candid and take China as an aggregate of human beings, and then judge what Yuan's administration has brought about. There is China, with millions of souls who live peacefully and to a certain extent comfortably, but who are in need of a modern political organization to help them to realize more good and to defend them from foreign intrusion. Has Yuan Shi Kai fulfilled even in the slightest degree this part of his gigantic task? Possibly China wants a strong centralized government, but what has that government done for the nation and what more is it going to do? It may perhaps be asserted that the firm establishment of Yuan's power "affords the most hopeful prospect for China's future" but again that requires proof. It is one thing to advocate a cause and identify a man with it, but to show that the cause is just and indispensable and that the man is faithful to his cause is entirely a different matter. Simple assertions like those of "Sinologue" will not suffice.

Whether China wants strong centralization of power is a difficult question that must be solved by past history and contemporary political events. Let me admit for argument's sake that "Sinologue's" assertion is right. What had Yuan Shi Kai done in the process of strengthening his power since the ill-starred assembly was dissolved? I challenge anyone to mention one single fact that proves beneficial to the nation. Let us recall the past four years of his administration and thereby judge his conduct. More soldiers have been recruited, not to guard the nation against any foreign foe but to suppress the so-called rebels. More money is used in unproductive business; expenditures for industrial and commercial development, for education and social reform, whether in local or central government, have been cut down to the lowest limit. Under the Manchu dynasty, certain titles could be bought Just as, in a sense, peerage in England can be; now certain offices can be procured if the holder of the office can furnish Yuan Shi Kai with enough money. When the central government, that is Yuan Shi Kai himself, calls in the aid of the provincial governors for more money to meet expenditures, that means he has more assassins to pay off, more bribes to be given, and in short more intrigues to be carried out. Taxes are naturally increased and the people must bear the burden. This, according to the "Sinologue," is perhaps a boon to the Chinese people as a result of Yuan's centralization of power.

Now, under the instigation of Yuan Shi Kai and his eldest son, Yuan Ko Ting, a monarchical movement was definitely fabricated. In the gorgeous name of the Will of the People, the change of the form of government was urged, a monarchical government was voted for, and lastly Yuan Shi Kai was elected the emperor. After refusing three times as a formality the kind offer from the people, Yuan Shi Kai at last promised to accept the crown. At present the declaration of the change is pending because the Powers have not yet been persuaded to recognize the new form of government. But at the same time, it is remarkable that practically in all official correspondence the President is designated by the Emperor; a wholesale creation of peers is being made, the majority of whom are soldiers, his faithful servants to protect his dynasty from the so-called rebels; imperial household expenses and grants to the individual princes have been very early fixed upon; and minute regulations as regards the maid of honor have been proclaimed. It requires no man of keen insight to understand the meaning of the change, even though you ignore the under-currents and back-door intrigues that have been going on all the time.

While I am writing, two provinces, Yunnan and Kweichow, have proclaimed independence, and the separatist movement is most certain to spread widely in the south. Officials and non-officials of strong character have left the capital; they flock either to Shanghai or to Japan as a place of refuge, for here and there where Yuan's iron grip is felt, an ominous darkness is foreshadowed by the ruthless persecution of the suspected rebels and the severe vigilance over the people by the soldiers and gendarmes. Even the best, staunchest friends of Yuan have now resigned their support either by leaving governmental office or by showing active hostility towards the change. Will our "Sinologue" prove that these people are all in the wrong while Yuan Shi Kai alone is in the right?

The unrest is imminent and the present crisis will perhaps prove fatal to China, for our aggressive neighbor will snatch any chance that is thrust upon her to take a larger share beyond Manchuria, or to secure more rights in the country. At any rate I am not concerned to speculate into the future. I hope this hastily written letter will correct in some way the "Sinologue's" false assertions. By the time this is published, America will be informed by wire of the newer developments in Chinese affairs.

A CHINAMAN.

Peking, China.

P. S. Kindly suppress my address and my name, as it is far from being safe to reveal my identity.

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Books and Things

DURING the past week many of us have waited breathlessly for news from Verdun. The possibility that this time a German army would be thrust deep into the side of France has had fear's power to shake us. Although we wish the Allies to succeed, and although we are not blind to the harm their cause will suffer if the Germans break the French line, yet this larger anxiety has been for the moment put aside by an intenser anxiety for France herself, so exposed and so resolute. We love France as if the country were a person. You may tell us that to care so much where knowledge is so slight is to be sentimental and unrealistic. That may be true. But realism is only one need of the spirit. It is not the sole need. If some of us are right in thinking we have a liking for realism, and if we do not choose to be realistic about France, then it is as plain as platitude that the causes of this choice lie deep, that we make it because we are grateful for pleasures we have really had. Our acquaintance with France and the French is imperfect and superficial. Our ignorance is great. But objects quite as imperfectly understood have inspired some of the most genuine affections in history.

No man understands friendship who can explain his choice of friends on merely rational grounds. It is just as hard to explain one's liking for French landscape, which may easily seem insipid to eyes blinded by delight in the gorgeous improbability of the tropics, and in which you miss that sense of something over, of acreage to spare, often given by landscape in the United States. Yet a few springs ago, while we were travelling south from Paris, I wondered how anybody could fail to enjoy a landscape so accessible to man. We went at a gentle pace, according to modern notions, through miles of faint greens turning vivider, following the river along shaded roads, down wide valleys cultivated everywhere, giving one a feeling that everything had long been put to human uses. Everywhere was the touch of orderly, diligent, waste-hating French hands. Then came a welcome breath of the north before the real south, when we looked at the high-lying spring snows on the mountains about Grenoble. Through the colored windings of a gorge with no one in it we came out upon windy Provençe, into a country of plain and low hills as fine as etching. After all this wind the stillness was very still at Valescure, where we woke up one morning with the Mediterranean light in our eyes.

In almost all this landscape, in the way we had taken from Paris to the Côte d'Azur, there was an economy, a terseness, that made one think of an orderly mind. Knowing so little French, one saw, in the people along the route, who are so different here from there to anybody who quite understands, only the traits common to nearly all, the faces alert with something which is at first almost suspicion, which changes easily into a self-respecting courtesy, and which takes equality as a pleasant matter of course. Being on the move all day, however, and mostly shut up through all this French scenery to the sound of our own voices, one didn't hear enough French, enough of that voluble speech in which every sentence is somehow concise. Perhaps this was why our journey, lying mostly through such accessible landscape, left an impression of the inaccessibility of France? This illusion did not survive a return to Paris, where French speech flooded in again as one did the usual pleasant things. It is because one understands French so ill, and speaks it worse, that the French seem inaccessible when one is among them, remote in their long tradition and their present habit. In the country one is brought to think of this tradition by the many signs of that long patience which has had its way with the soil. Here in Paris it is the older streets, the narrow passages below crenellated towers, that waken sleeping memories, that give one a sense of tradition, of time, of a country which has been great for so many years.

The interest on these visits to France, although when I am there I am conscious of the isolating power of an inaccurate ear and a stumbling tongue, is paid when I get home again and take up a French book. I hear French voices as I read, and some of them are so kind as to speak now and then with a French accent. My eye remembers too, after its fashion, and my pleasure in reading is heightened by this presence of a visible and audible world. The very journey which made me realize the inaccessibility of France now makes French books more accessible than they had been. Somewhere in this universe I sit and read. What is this universe? "C'est une sphère infinie dont le centre est partout, la circonférence nulle part." To say with a talker's ease things as difficult as thought—what an art of prose! To give to calculated order, to hard intellectual structure, such an air of naturalness, almost of improvisation! To confine a richness of varied elements into sentences as simple as poverty! With a casual hand to place each of these sentences where it can look backward and forward! Here are closeness with ease, with profundity, gaiety that diffuses light. How lurid Latin luridity is, and how Latin! By its side our English prose looks turbid and slipshod.

A bookish pleasure, people may say who insist upon distinction between literature and life. But even when we are tasting, smelling, touching the most real of real worlds, our life is only something that goes on inside us. It does not require that the stimuli we are responding to should have animal or vegetable life of their own. Life can be better measured by the intensity of that process which is going on inside the man or woman who is doing the living. Often for days on end I am asleep in life and only wake up when I begin to read. Sometimes I am exhausted by the society of persons who think they can open their closed minds by taking them to walk through a museum of modern topics. After such an experience it is a relief to read Montaigne, to remember that nobody, in any of the three centuries since his time, has had a mind more free, to feel a deep gratitude to the nation of whose free spirit his genius is the most complete expression.

Free minds are not possible to most of us, but a belief in their existence is possible, and it was from France that some of us first got this belief. From France, too, we first learned, although never before so solidly as in the past year and a half, that qualities we had been taught in youth to look upon as mutually destructive, could exist side by side in one nation, that the light hand might be strong, and the laboring mind take its ease. Of France we may know little, yet our affection is real. It springs from gratitude for qualities we wish the world to keep. Gratitude is at the bottom of the anxiety we have felt, for a week past, while listening for news from Verdun.

P. L.

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The Upstart

The Belfry, by May Sinclair. New York: The Macmillan Co. $1.35.

MISALLIANCE of the social sort is a good theme for Miss May Sinclair. Her acuteness is just right for the situation of a well-bred woman in love with a brilliant *parvenu*. She is enough in a tradition to account for that tradition gracefully where Mrs. Humphry Ward would account for it obsequiously. She is enough of an adventurous soul to fling open magic casements on a perilous marital sea. But rewarding as Miss Sinclair's past performances have been, "The Belfry" has an unusual quality. Crisp, sure, incisive, it shows full command of a drama and it has a full drama for command. A word like hysteria is a dangerous word, but there have been novels of Miss Sinclair's in which her nervous energy was certainly all too nervous. Here there is a firmness of touch and tone. She has an exacting subject. She manages it with a surprising and delighting verve.

And besides this magnetic quality, there is, for the peculiar purpose of this narrative, an extremely skilful contrivance of the plot. Everyone knows how hard it is to convey the brilliancy of a fictional "genius." The bald assertion, the painstaking substantiation of genius are all to no good. But Miss Sinclair has here, to my mind, shown her greatest tact as a novelist. The story is told by the genius's gentlemanly rival for Viola's hand. Just by the degree that we accept the rectitude, the propriety, the slight priggishness of the narrator, we feel Jevons all startling and stunning. He stuns the narrator. He does him up. And, since we judge by relativities, we are able to conceive of him as really doing up someone besides an infatuated creator. The testimony of the rival goes a long way to make the genius valid.

In attempting to speak as a man Miss Sinclair dared greatly. Her narrator is not serenely in male character all the time. It is a feminine eye that is charmed by Jevons' vivid flush, his "two rather prominent white teeth pressed down on his lower lip." It is a woman who feels: "if he'd been handsome he'd have been dreadful," "I may say at once I was prostrated as any slave before his conversation." But these are trifles, and disputable. The main thing is the value and the success of the invention. Especially as it involved the vast difficulty of justifying the relations between the bounder who wins and the fair gentleman who loses, punctilious where punctilio seals his doom.

The romance of Miss Sinclair's rumpled little *parvenu* is the romance of the will-to-power. "I know I am writing about a man whom many people still consider a great novelist and great playwright," the narrator says. "God knows I don't want to disparage him. But to me what he has written matters so little; it has no interest for me except as his vehicle, the vehicle in which he arrived; which brought him to his destination quicker perhaps than any other which he could have chosen. His talent was so adroit that he might have chosen almost any other; chance and a happy knack and a habit of observation determined his selection of the written word. Compared with the spectacle of his arrival, what he has written is neither here nor there." It is this "arrival" for which his genius was most complete. And where he wanted to arrive, "most awfully," was not merely at reputation. He had the necessity all the more to arrive at the citadel of Viola's heart.

For the ultimate censorship is the woman's, and if Jevons could not win against that he was still an illegitimate. A single man of any origin may go far against any set of traditions. He may disrupt legislatures and judiciaries and universities and academies. He may conquer clubs and secret societies and homes. But whom may he marry? And who, after he has married, will know him, will frank him from one inside circle to another as a person who understands the inexplicable, a person with the right shibboleth and the *convenance?* Does he come with an expectancy that he is to rub noses? In itself an amusing habit, but it suggests possibilities. If too many such possibilities are suggested, society will make his marriage morganatic. He may make what he likes of his overt successes. There is no court to which he can appeal against the *moue*.

It is this Jevons knows, and it is this Miss Sinclair dramatizes. But she shows that for the woman, too, there is a counterbalancing problem. To the making of her family may have gone "great streams of empire and of race, streams of august tradition, of sanctity and heroism and honour, and beautiful looks and gentle ways and breeding." The eruptive gestures of a Jevons may break out like a rash on this surface, but—"bursting, as he was, with vitality and invading with the courage and energy and genius of a conqueror a world that was not his"—his campaign could become the woman's, providing his fire was for her a divine fire. And Viola does make the bounder's campaign her own, up through his triumphs of watchful sensitiveness and conciliation, up to the awful efflorescences of prosperous self.

One admires so much the turn of episode in this novel, the drama itself shouldering and swinging forward the characterization, that one regrets at the end to demur. But in spite of the skilful sanction given to Jevons by the war, the question does arise as to the price of the sanction and the quality of the "arrival" that he makes. This excellent novel is not the creature of a moment. It must have been deep in Miss Sinclair for a long time before the war. But the war swept her to a climax that, whatever its eloquence, is full of a particular ideology, and one cannot help marveling a little at this ideology, though it is projected with such art.

When Jevons precipitates his marriage with Viola by going madly off with her to the continent, people suspect that Viola is "horrid." It is essential to the story Miss Sinclair is telling that Viola and Jevons should not be "horrid"—that they should have spent their time consumed with the outdoor beauty of the belfry at Bruges. Similarly, when the war comes, it is essential that Jevons should be equally intelligible—not as an artist, a man of ideas, a genius, but as a socially conceivable mate. And he seeks himself in the war to make good with Viola by making good with her own tradition. He gets immunity for jerking his thumb by literally losing his hand. This does round up the romance of his "arrival." But that arrival requires profound conformities. Against these conformities there is, of course, nothing to urge. One does not propose seduction and "cowardice" as the only choice open to Jevons. But one perceives that in avoiding seducing and cowardice Jevons avoided the real crux—the crux that is suggested to snobs when a man drops his aitch.

Of course Miss Sinclair has a right to make her bounder do nothing to contravene the ultimate requirements of Reggie, Viola's beloved ramrodded military brother. But doesn't Jevons' satisfactoriness about chastity and courage beg the whole question? The test of a society's radicalism is the basis of sexual selection. What is the range of the

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well-bred woman's choice? It is not the political institutions that are shared which decide the character of a civilization. It is the beds. But if Jevons was true blue, as Canterbury sees it, where is the issue? The real test for the Violas comes from the men who do run away with them to Bruges, and can't placate the Reggies when they return. But in this case the upstart intrinsically complies with Viola's tradition. One suspects that, strangely enough, it seems romantic to Miss Sinclair. It is certainly a solution with which the standpatter ought to be satisfied.

F. H.

Modern French Poets

Six French Poets, by Amy Lowell. New York: The Macmillan Co. $2.50 net.

HERE is a book about which I cannot be dispassionate. It has given me too many kinds of pleasure: the almost religious pleasure of seeing French literature coming into its own in America; the emotional and sensuous pleasure of rereading six poets whom I have long known and loved; finally the intellectual pleasure of agreeing with Miss Lowell, and disagreeing with her.

To dispose at once of my most fundamental difference, I must lament that she has chosen to lead us to the fountains of modern French poetry by means of lectures. Even inside the covers of a book, especially there, this method of treatment lowers one's mental temperature. But lectures have become a national malady, and Miss Lowell is justified in considering the American public a sophomore so far as her subject goes. Moreover she bears a name that might well provoke her to challenge the Harvard professor on his own ground. In the city where the very words, "Lowell lecture," evoke a grim traditional hall and a bald-headed scholar who emerges from a traditional door at a traditional stroke of the clock to speak the traditional word of wisdom, in Boston it becomes an adventurous act to appear on a platform leading six strange-looking French authors by the hand. "Ladies and Gentlemen," says this gallant iconoclast, "let me present you to my friends MM. Verhaeren, Samain, de Gourmont, de Régnier, Jammes, and Fort. You have never even heard of some of them? So much the worse for you and the Boston Public Library. They are the accredited successors of Verlaine and Mallarmé, those so-called *décadents* who fathered the modern poetic movement to which I have the honor to belong. Two of them, Samain and de Gourmont, are already dead; the rest are far from being upstart youngsters. Indeed"—here her eye flashes and her voice rises from friendliness to authority—"they are the *greatest* poets of modern France and of our age."

This easy, biographical, enthusiastic presentation has obvious merits. It breaks down barriers; it largely fulfils Miss Lowell's aim: "to give the reader the effect of having known the man and read his books as they were published, commenting on them as they came along." The solid collection of facts and dates will be useful to the student, and the many finely characteristic quotations should—especially in the light of the comments of the leader of the American imagists, and the admirable literal prose translations given in the Appendix—do much to set on their way "the poet seeking new inspiration, the reader endeavoring to understand a new poetic idiom."

Verhaeren, whom recent history has brought into prominence, will certainly be more comprehensible to American readers than any of the other five poets. But I suspect that Miss Lowell found him difficult to fit into her volume. Chronologically he belongs where she has placed him, at the beginning; but as he is actually the most modern of the lot, should he not stand rather at the end, pointing the way to *les jeunes,* the French *Unanimiste* generation which owes so much of its inspiration to this tremendous Belgian? Miss Lowell, relatively impervious to his social philosophy, has drawn a vivid picture of his Flemish background, and her analysis of the technical side of his work is extremely suggestive. The difficulties of rendering in another language the characteristics of Verhaeren's *vers-libre*—with its assonance, its middle and end rhymes, its onomatopoeia—are practically insurmountable, but I commend those who cannot read the original to these vigorous versions which must have cost the translator blood and tears.

From the exuberant democrat who has made poetry "realize the modern world," we return with rather a shock to three delicate poetic aristocrats, Albert Samain, Remy de Gourmont, and Henri de Régnier, *Symboliste* poets who were all, in their measure, haunted by the past. *Symbolisme,* in general terms, means individualism, it means suggestion as opposed to the cold Parnassian definition, but it also means a certain detachment from reality. Samain, a humble clerk his whole life, looked a Spanish grandee, and lived grandiosely in the realms of his imagination. His poems were among the first published by the *Mercure de France,* and his three slender volumes, though largely written in traditional metres, represent perhaps the most exquisite first effort of French verse to emancipate itself. The new *vers-libre* experiment of building verse not on

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metre but cadence, carried much farther by de Gourmont and de Régnier, reached in the latter a beautiful mastery, "a movement of speed and delight," to use Miss Lowell's happy phrase, which to the foreign ear at least is far more intoxicating than the alexandrine.

De Gourmont's extraordinary skill as a learned technician of *vers-libre* naturally appeals to an imagist, but I am inclined to think that except among students of versification the artificiality of the "Litanies de la Rose" has already condemned them. One of the wisest acts of de Gourmont's life seems to me the publication, near the end of it, of a single volumne called "Divertissements," in which from his already small poetic output he excluded all those poems which were representative of a "life of art" in favor of those significant of "a life of sentiment." There one finds the enchanting "Simone" poems, "simple, sensuous and passionate," by which I believe he will be finally judged.

Henri de Régnier emerges as the leading figure of the *Symbolistes,* but many readers will feel that, like Samain, he has lingered too long in the gardens of Versailles. Even in his most mature work, where *Symbolisme* is tempered by realism, he does not live with us the life of to-day; his highest adventures take place in a legendary antiquity; the beauty he feels most is that of decay; his voice is always veiled by regretful memories. I share Miss Lowell's admiration for the Versailles sonnets and for poems like "Le Vase," but that she should put him as a novelist in the line of Balzac seems to me incomprehensible.

Every critic has some favorite word; Chesterton's is "important"; Miss Lowell's is "great." "One strange thing about Verhaeren is his true greatness." De Gourmont is "one of the greatest artists of his generation"; de Régnier "one of the great poets of France . . . and an even greater novelist"; Paul Fort is "a great poet, a very great poet." "Waiter," called Paul Fort at a poetic banquet in a final effort to reduce a hated rival to silence, "quick, waiter, bring the gentleman the Panthéon." "Great" is a peculiarly hollow word in modern French poetic circles. De Régnier has now achieved the Academy, but, as the *vers-librists* say, because of his weak return to regular forms. As for Fort, probably neither he nor the constituents who elected him to his legendary office of *Prince des Poètes* take this title very seriously. I understand insistence on "greatness,"—Miss Lowell is tilting against hidebound professors—but I think she has no case when she states that Fort has "won the game" in his own country. It is not merely to the American librarian and the French proletarian, but to the French bourgeois and the French intellectual that Fort's treatment of verse and prose "as one instrument graduated" is repellent. One needs to have a revolutionary ear and eye even in France to understand—well, how *épatant* such work is.

The papers on Jammes and Fort are by far the best, or is that because I too adore these happy "moderns" whom Miss Lowell distinguishes from their predecessors by their "exteriority"? "By this . . . I mean an interest in the world apart from oneself. . . . The Modern gives us picture-making without comment." Francis Jammes' poetry "blows across the scented verses of the '90's like the wind from one of the snow-capped peaks of his native Pyrenees." But there again I disagree. Surely there is nothing of the cold and bracing in his exquisitely sensuous verse; rather a "homely cottage smell" of mint and new-mown hay. The flowing complication of his rhythm fairly melts one's heart, and one drops down on the nearest haystack under the deep blue sky of the Midi to listen and beg for more. Miss Lowell is right in saying that this gift of his is "all aroma, all evanescent, fleeting sensation." But why, in calling him a "bucolic" poet, "the poet of contentment, of observation, of simplicity," does she not add that his is the simplicity of a very complex personality? He is, after all, a "*faux-naïf,*" which perhaps accounts for his allowing conversion to dogmatic Catholicism to formalize a genius whose truest secret seemed to be in letting the current flow.

Miss Lowell has frequently proclaimed her own debt to Paul Fort. As she says, he, like Verhaeren, should be read by English-speaking people because both in manner and in matter we can understand him. Yet he is the last living Gallic Bohemian, a familiar figure in the cafés of Montmartre and Montparnasse, hugely poseur in private life—his dramatic instinct not being confined to poetry—while extraordinarily spontaneous, robust, and prolific in his long series of "Ballades Françaises." When he seeks the past, antiquity is just nature with no shade of *Symboliste pastiche.* His peculiarity as a craftsman is that he passes from verse to prose at will, his verse not being *vers-libre* but a free form of the alexandrine. Here again in the long quotations Miss Lowell set herself a monumental task of which she has acquitted herself nobly. May we not hope for a series of literary essays to supplement this volume which by its nature is more or less of a handbook? I want more of the poetic analysis that is the imagist's most original contribution. If I had written the book—ah, if I only had!—I might have felt obliged to include several other French poets. What of Claudel? What of Péguy? But in such choices personal sympathy counts for much. Read Miss Lowell and you will make a very delightful acquaintance with the six men who seem to her the last shining links in the great French poetic chain that begins with Lamartine and ends with the war of 1914.

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT.

A Decorative Success

The Little Iliad, by Maurice Hewlett. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company.

ANY book by Maurice Hewlett renews my curiosity about his process. All I know of it is what one of his publishers has told, namely, that Mr. Hewlett writes a novel in the evening and very rapidly, that he destroys or lays aside this first version, and then without consulting it writes a second just as fast, that he often writes a third version in the same way, that he does almost no rewriting of any other kind. This information merely aggravates one's curiosity. Is the difference between the first version and the last merely a difference in texture, in the degree of Mr. Hewlett's success in keeping the tone he set out to achieve? Or does he alter the course of his fable and remodel his characters?

In the case of Mr. Hewlett's newest novel, "The Little Iliad," I should very much like to know at what moment, whether before beginning to write his first version or a good deal later, he decided to give his denouement away, as he does in these words on page 11: Hector "achieved a preposterous position for himself and his mistress. He bestrode a bottomless gulf with triumphant intrepidity. The world wondered. And then, even as we gasped, he sagged in the middle and fell in. The affair which he had begun went on of itself. It was as if the champion of Troy, instead of going out to face Achilles, had stayed at home with the toothache, and left the affair to Priam, King

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and Patriarch. That was what happened in this leaguer of a minor Troy, which I chronicle here."

Thus we know, almost at the outset, that it wasn't Hector Mulleson, heir to Singleton and Inveroran in the Western Highlands, and that it was old Sir Roderick himself, who finally won the beautiful Helena von Broderode. Knowing this, we give credence to the story more readily, we are more at leisure to enjoy Mr. Hewlett's landscapes and his figure-printing. But we do wonder, when we have finished the book, whether Mr. Hewlett's motive in thus letting us in on the ground floor wasn't a fear that his story mightn't go down with us if he didn't.

What interests me, however, even more than the criticism which the author may perhaps pass upon his plot by the act of giving it away in advance, is the strict congruity in Mr. Hewlett's case of his precaution with the tone of his story. "The Little Iliad" is told in the first person. The narrator is a bystander who would like to take part, a substitute with a faint hope of a chance to get into the game, a recorder whose manner of taking the whole thing gives us the tip, helps us to read in the right comedic spirit. The understanding between us and this narrator is that his story is queer and diverting, and that if it doesn't strike us as both we had better leave it alone.

The danger here is either that the narrator will get set in his attitude, that his will to see things as comedy will seem deliberate and irrelevant, or else that he will now and then lose, when he tries to render a beauty or to hand on a thrill, both his attitude and his identity. Very dexterous is the art with which Mr. Hewlett avoids this danger. His narrator is always himself, yet always free to paint for his pleasure and ours, a portrait, a meeting, or an August morning on the West coast of Scotland: "It was a day of dry heat. There was a faint blue mist rapidly clearing before the sun. The country all about was faintly bleached with draught. The promise of the moment was for torrid weather. It was not yet nine o'clock, but the sky was white. The sea lay like a sheet of burnished steel—motionless, colorless."

And as the narrator's amusement can take places and persons and times of day in its stride, and can do justice to their other than amusing qualities, so his mere style can pick up a good many rebellious colors and surfaces and work them into just its own texture. Mr. Hewlett uses slang and near slang—"here he was then, up against it," "I went to London, I got busy," "it's up to you," "I don't like cold women, and have no use whatever for women who don't like me." He puts in a touch, no more, of Meredith—"it is gallantry that carries them there, and only human nature that makes them see-saw for a balance." These and other elements Mr. Hewlett makes into one distinct, laconic, dining-out manner.

Mr. Hewlett's main success is with his persons—with Helena von Broderode, with the brave sinister Austrian Baron her husband, with gallant and fatuous old Sir Roderick, with the maid Ethel—"about five foot eight, with a fine, small head on her shoulders, and a grave, self-possessed pair of grey eyes." If they were as good when in action as they are when we make their acquaintance, "The Little Iliad" would take a much higher place among Mr. Hewlett's novels. Unluckily this isn't the case. Their significance is greater before they begin to do things, before things begin to happen to them, so much greater as to sum in the end almost a decorative significance. But this peculiarity doesn't keep the book from being extremely interesting to anybody who is really curious about the art of writing.

Q. K.

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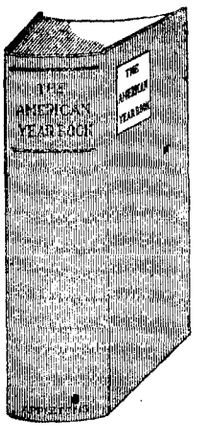

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